Table of Contents

1. I
2. II
3. III
4. IV
5. V
6. VI
7. DEMON GIYUU GALLERY ✧✧
8. VII
9. VIII
10. IX (unfinished)
11. Is anyone still here?? (authors note)

I

[I]

Giyuu Tomioka, the water Hashira, and one of the nine pillars. No one ever thought that one day, he might have become an enemy to the demon slayer corps.

***

Nights seemed to grow longer as everyone got closer to accomplishing their goal; defeating and killing Muzan. It was currently coming to the brink of dawn, and Tanjiro Kamado, Zenitsu Agatsuma, Inosuke Hashibira, and Kyojuro Rengoku were all on their way back to Ubuyashiki after defeating the train demon.

((In this AU, Akaza never came, therefore Rengoku never died))

"Amazing job out there, Tanjiro," Rengoku said as the four walked, looking back at Tanjiro. The boy's eyes shone.

"Thanks, Rengoku-san, but you were the amazing one out there," he said, smiling. "You're really strong, and your flame breathing techniques helped with a lot." The two continued their conversation, Zenitsu and Inosuke trailing behind quietly.

"How much further do we have to walkkkk," Zenitsu complained after awhile.

"The train did travel a long way before we were able to defeat Enmu, so this might take a while," Tanjiro replied. In response, Zenitsu continued complaining. It took them some hours before they reached their destination.

"Welcome back Tanjiro, did you successfully defeat the demon?" Shinobu was the first to greet the returning group.

"Yep! Ren-"

"Tanjiroooo. Can we hurry and go inside pleaasee, my entire body huuurttss," Zenitsu interrupted.

"No way! Let's go train instead!" Inosuke exclaimed. Shinobu watched the group silently. Smiling nervously, Tanjiro gathered his friends and left into the building they were being housed in.

"Welcome, Onii-chan!" Nezuko greeted Tanjiro with a loving smile when he entered his room.

"Nezuko!" The siblings walked over to each other and hugged. "I came back alive, as promised." Tanjiro smiled warmly at his sister.

"Mhm!" Nezuko smiled, patting her brother's head.

"Nezuko-chaaaaannnn~" Zenitsu burst into the room, running towards Nezuko. Surprised, she quickly ducked behind her brother, who in return laughed.

"Zenitsu, please don't come charging at Nezuko like that," Tanjiro said to the yellow-haired boy.

"S-sorry if I scared you, N-Nezuko-chan," Zenitsu said shyly.

"It's okay!" Nezuko smiled at him.

Nezuko-chan's smile is so pure and sweet, Zenitsu thought in a daze. A few moments later, there was a knock on the door. Zenitsu continued simping as Tanjiro got up to see who came. Sliding open the door, he was greeted by Shinobu and Kanao.

"H-hello Shinobu-san, Kanao-san!" Kanao smiled shyly, Shinobu being the one to speak.

"Tanjiro, I know you just got back from battle, but there's something I need you to do for me."

"Sure! What is it?"

"I need you to go out and look for Tomioka-san for me," she said to him.

"Hmm? Alright, but why?" he asked, confused.

Shinobu sighed. "Normally we wouldn't mind if Tomioka-san was gone for a little while, but he's been gone since yesterday, and hasn't been in contact with anyone. Ubuyashiki wants one of us to find him and make sure he didn't run into trouble. His crow was the first one to search, but found no signs."

"Okay, leave it up to me!" Tanjiro said with determination.

"Thanks, Tanjiro," Shinobu said with a smile. She then walked away, Kanao trailing behind.

"Good luck, Tanjiro," Kanao said quietly over her shoulder.

Smiling with new determination, Tanjiro turned to Zenitsu, Nezuko, and now Inosuke, who had snuck in during the conversation. "Zenitsu, Inosuke, stay here with Nezuko, please. I have to go look for Giyuu-san."

"Okayyy Tanjirooo," Zenitsu replied. Inosuke was busy making messes.

"Make sure they don't wreck the place, alright, Nezuko?" Tanjiro looked over at his little sister.

"Okay, Onii-chan! Stay safe, alright?"

"I will, I promise." Tanjiro turned away, sliding the door shut behind him as he left. *I hope Giyuu-san is okay*, Tanjiro thought to himself with worry. *I know it's common for him to go off on his own, but not for a whole day... Or at least, not without telling someone...*

Tanjiro traveled away from the area, trying to pick up Giyuu's scent, even if stale. Finding nothing, he headed in the direction of a training area that Giyuu went to when he had the motivation to train. He sniffed around there and found Giyuu's faint scent. It took him back to Tomioka's estate, which was seemingly empty. *Surely they would've found him if he was here*, the red-haired boy told himself. He followed the trail to the back of the building, where Giyuu had last exited. Tanjiro continued following the scent, being led to a mountain.

"A mountain? What would Giyuu-san be doing here? Were there demons?" he questioned. "No, if he was on a mission, they would know where he was at during that time. And his scent here is from after the time he disappeared, so it couldn't be a demon hunt." Tanjiro trekked up the mountain for a few hours before the scent was gone.

"It's gone," he said to himself. "Where did he go after this?" Then an idea clicked in his head. "Giyuu-san must've gone back down!" He began to walk back down the trail he had taken to get up, eventually going off-track when he noticed the scent took a turn. Some more hours later, he was back down the mountain and walking away from it.

It was already past noon by now, and Tanjiro had to stop for a small food break. "Still no signs of Giyuu-san," he sighed to himself. After he finished eating, he continued, putting a remaining rice ball in a pouch he had in Nezuko's box (which he had brought along through instinct).

"Giyuu-saaaaannnn!" He called out for the water pillar but got no response. His search continued for hours until it was beginning to get dark. Panting as he trekked up another hill, he sniffed around some more. *I lost his scent! Thi-* he paused, sniffing the air more. *The scent of blood!* Tanjiro ran the rest of this way up the small hill and continued running forward until he saw something in the distance. The scent of blood was growing stronger. As he approached what was now clearly a body, he began to recognize the attire. Throwing the box of his back to go fast, he darted over.

"Giyuu-san!" he shouted as he landed on his knees by the body. Tomioka Giyuu was lying motionless on the ground, kimono covered in blood. His blade was a distance away from him, stabbed into a tree. Tanjiro was about to lean down and check his heartbeat and pulse when the Hashira suddenly moved. "G-Giyuu-san! What happened?" the boy asked frantically. The water Hashira said nothing, but instead slowly tried getting to his feet. It seemed as if, though Tanjiro had spoken to him, Giyuu hadn't noticed the other boy. As he struggled to stand, Giyuu made a sound that sounded like a small growl.

"Giyuu-san don't move! You'll make it worse!" Tanjiro quickly but gently grabbed the other, trying to support his weight. This was the moment when the pillar noticed him. Quick as lightning, Giyuu whipped around, knocking Tanjiro to the ground and trying to bite him. Out of instinct from when the same thing happened with Nezuko, Tanjiro grabbed the nearest thing and put it in front of his face to stop Tomioka's attack. Since he couldn't get his blade out quick enough, this item ended up being a thick stick that was lying nearby. With Giyuu's strength, Tanjiro knew the thing wouldn't last long.

"Giyuu-san! What are you-" the red-haired boy stopped when he saw Tomioka's eyes. They had changed, the way Nezuko's had when she became a demon. *Giyuu-san has been turned into a demon! But how! And by who*?! Tanjiro thought frantically. He knew that if Muzan had come across Giyuu, he would kill him, not turn him into a demon. Muzan hated the demon slayers and would prefer if they were dead.

"Giyuu-san don't do this! You would never kill a human! You only kill demons!" Tanjiro struggled to hold him off, his words seemingly futile. Tomioka growled, trying harder to break the stick so he could get his attack through. "Giyuu-san! Please stop before someone comes and tries to kill you! I'll get you to Tamayo-san and you won't have to be like this anymore!" Tanjiro stared up at Giyuu, trying to get through to him. As he did this, he noticed something. His eyes. In Tomioka's eyes, there was no hatred. There wasn't any hunger or thirst for blood. Just desperation. *Giyuu-san's in there, somewhere. He doesn't want to do this. But he can't control himself...* The now-demon Giyuu finally bit through the stick, fangs bared at Tanjiro as he brought his attack down. But instead of biting the boy, something else happened.

The demon slayer felt Giyuu's arms slip under his back, and his head landed lightly on the boy's shoulder. He was hugging him. "G-Giyuu-san," he whispered softly. He could tell that the demon was doing his best to restrain himself. "It's alright, Giyuu-san. I'll get you to Tamayo-san and she'll cure you." The younger boy wrapped his arms back around the Hashira before trying to sit up. Getting the message from the other's movements, Giyuu crawled off. Still

growling, the water pillar struggled to restrain himself from attacking Tanjiro again. Tanjiro hurried over to Nezuko's old box, bringing it over to Giyuu. He knew he'd have to be quick if he wanted to avoid another attack. Bringing out the cleaned bamboo muzzle Nezuko always wore, Tanjiro walked over to Giyuu and wrapped it around his head, the bamboo piece at his mouth. The demon tried to resist at first, but Tanjiro managed to get it on him. Giyuu shook with the effort to not attack.
"Come on, Giyuu-san. The box is yours now." Tanjiro smiled and Giyuu slowly crept forward, crawling into the box. He looked at the pouch holding the rice ball before looking back up at Tanjiro. Tanjiro grabbed the bag, placing it in his kimono. Satisfied, Giyuu curled like a ball in the box, Tanjiro shutting it for him. The boy then put the box on his back, struggling to walk with it since Giyuu was heavier than Nezuko. He pulled the blade from the tree and put it in its sheath, which was right under the blade at the foot of the tree.

"Let's hope they don't take this too badly," Tanjiro said in a worried tone.

***

By the time Tanjiro got back with Giyuu, it was almost midnight. Panting, he entered the area in which he stayed. Giyuu growled quietly in a complaint from all the movement.
"Sorry, Giyuu-san," Tanjiro whispered.

"Tan-jir-ooo~." The boy stiffened at the female voice saying his name. He recognized Shinobu's scent. "Why have you brought another demon here?" Tanjiro slowly turned to the insect pillar.

He sighed before speaking. "Shinobu-san, can you get the others so I can tell them too?"

"Ok, meet us all upfront," she replied after a moment of silence. Tanjiro nodded and started walking out of the estate. Shinobu disappeared into the darkness. As soon as he arrived in the spot he was originally brought to after the mountain incident, he was greeted by the face of each pillar, lit up by the torches lit in the area.

"So he brought another one," Sanemi growled in irritation.

"I'm tired, can I go back to sleep?" Muichiro asked.

"Maybe Master Ubuyashiki will let us execute him this time," Obanai said, staring at Tanjiro with pure hatred.

"Well, what demon have you brought to us this time?" Shinobu asked.

Tanjiro nervously set down the box opening in, the back facing the pillars.
(Note; They were all there, I just couldn't come up with lines for them all).

"Come out, Giyuu-san. It's alright," he said quietly, so none of the other pillars could hear. Giyuu looked up at him with an expression saying that he didn't want to come out. "It's ok, I won't let them hurt you." Tanjiro smiled, holding his hand out to Giyuu. The water pillar stared at him for a few more moments before reaching out his hand and taking Tanjiro's. He slowly lifted himself out of the box, pulling himself up to full height. Once he was out, he turned to the other pillars, looking somewhat scared. All of the pillars stared, dead silent in shock.

"T-Tomioka-san?!" Shinobu stared at the water pillar in disbelief.

"One of our kind has fallen into the depths of darkness," Himejima said, hands together in a praying position.

"What's Master Ubuyashiki going to think of this?" Obanai asked. No responses came to any of them. Giyuu looked over the group of pillars. Staring at Shinobu, he recalled some things she had said in the past and stepped a small ways behind Tanjiro as if hiding. "Mmnng..," he complained softly. Tanjiro looked up at him, and he looked back up at the group of Hashira. When his eyes landed on Obanai, he thought back to the time when the pillar had hurt Tanjiro, when Tanjiro first was brought to the place. Giyuu started growling, lowly at first, but then louder, staring angrily at Obanai. Noticing this immediately, Obanai put a hand on the hilt of his blade, ready to defend himself if Giyuu tried to attack him.

"G-Giyuu-san, calm down! Don't hurt any of them! They aren't your enemies, and they won't hurt you!" Tanjiro said frantically. Giyuu continued growling, still glaring at Obanai.

"Tanjiro, if he attacks anyone, we can't guarantee you his life," Shinobu said. "It's the same as when Nezuko was a demon. The second Giyuu eats or even *hurts* a human, we will have to kill him. So I suggest you get Tamayo-san's antidote in him as soon as possible." Tanjiro looked at Shinobu, concern for Giyuu in his eyes, then hurried in front of Obanai, spread his arms out as if turning himself into the target.

"Don't hurt him Giyuu-san! He's on your side, all humans are! So please, don't attack!"
Giyuu stopped growling when he saw Tanjiro in front of Obanai. He looked down as if disappointed in himself. Obanai glared hard at Tanjiro, who rushed back to Giyuu.
"It's ok, Giyuu-san. Go back in the box now, okay?" Giyuu nodded then crawled back into the box, Tanjiro shutting it. The Hashira were silent. A few moments later, Muichiro spoke.

"We should wait until tomorrow to do anything," the mist pillar said. "Master Ubuyashiki needs to have the final decision on what to do with him." All the other pillars agreed, and soon after they all went back to their separate estates. Tanjiro walked back to the place where he was being housed. Walking in quietly so he didn't wake anyone, he set the box in the corner of the room.
"Goodnight, Giyuu-san," he whispered before crawling into his bed and sleeping.

***

"GYAHHHHH!! TANJIRO WHY IS THE WATER PILLAR A DEMON?!"
Zenitsu's yelling woke Tanjiro, who rubbed his eyes sleepily.

"Huh? What's wrong Zenitsu?" he asked in a sleepy tone.

"THAT'S WHAT'S WRONG!!" the yellow-haired boy shouted, pointing at Giyuu, who was sitting behind the box, clearly disturbed by the yelling.

"Oh, Giyuu-san. Good morning." Tanjiro smiled, standing up and walking over to the demon. Giyuu blinked up at him.

"Where's the demon?! I'll kill em'!" Inosuke jumped up, grabbing his swords.

"No, Inosuke, you won't kill him," Tanjiro said, turning around.

"Huh?! Isn't that the half-n-half dude?"

"Yeah, it's Giyuu-san. He was turned into a demon. I'm going to take him to Tamayo-san and get him cured."

"How boring."
Tanjiro turned back to Giyuu. "Can you get in the box, Giyuu-san?" Tomioka crawled back into the box. Zenitsu watched from a distance, scared that Giyuu would attack them. Putting the box on his back, Tanjiro left the place, walking towards the edge of the property.

"Tanjiro-kun!" Kanao came running towards him. "Everyone is waiting for you, Master Ubuyashiki has come. It's time to decide what we do with Tomioka-san." Tanjiro nodded, following the female as she led him back to the meeting area.

"Master Ubuyashiki-san! It's nice to see you again!" Tanjiro bowed.

"Good morning, Tanjiro," Ubuyashiki greeted him with his usual calm, peaceful smile. Tanjiro hurried to line up beside the Hashira. "I'm sure you're all aware why this meeting was held," Ubuyashiki began. "One of my precious children has been turned into a demon." He looked over at the box holding Giyuu. "I have gathered you all here so we can discuss the fate of the water pillar and Hashira, Giyuu Tomioka. This incident can be seen as major and can ruin the demon slayers if he eats or harms any humans. However, there is one thing I would like to try before any sort of execution is given." The head of the demon slayers looked over at the Hashira, then turned his gaze to Tanjiro. "Tanjiro, I would like for you to take Tomioka to Lady Tamayo. If there is any available, be sure to use the antidote on him. I do not want for us to lose anyone."

"Understood! I'll do that right away!"

"While Tanjiro cures Tomioka, I would like to discuss with you all what we can and will do if this happens again, along with what we will do if he were to attack a human before we could cure him," Ubuyashiki said calmly to the rest of the group. Tanjiro, realizing he was dismissed from the meeting, stood and left, of course taking the box with him.

"Onii-chan~! Good morning!" Nezuko came running towards Tanjiro, waving and smiling.

"Good morning, Nezuko," Tanjiro said, smiling back at her.

"Hm? What's the box for?" Nezuko tilted her head as she looked at the box strapped to her older brother's back.

"Giyuu-san is in there," he replied.

"That's the water pillar, right?"

"Mhm. I found him last night. He was turned into a demon, though I'm not sure by who." Nezuko stared up at him with concern. "It'll be fine, I'm taking him to Tamayo-san right now to get him cured."

"Okie, be safe onii-chan!" Tanjiro hugged his little sister before she went back in the direction that she had come from. He continued on until he reached the estate Tamayo was allowed to stay in. Before he could get close enough to knock on the door, he was 'greeted' by Yushiro.

"What do you want? Lady Tamayo is busy," the demon said in a harsh tone.

"Good morning Yushiro-san," Tanjiro said nervously. "I'm here because-"

"You have another demon with you. Who is it this time? I thought we already cured your sister."

"It's one of the Hashira." Yushiro's eyes widened, then he sighed.

"I suppose I can let you enter." Turning around, Yushiro opened the door, leading Tanjiro inside. "Lady Tamayo, we have a guest," the demon called into the house.

"Bring him in here," a female voice responded. Yushiro walked with Tanjiro into a room, where the female demon Tamayo sat on a chair beside a bed. "Tanjiro, welcome," she greeted Tanjiro with a calm, friendly voice.

"Hello, Tamayo-san!" Tanjiro bowed quickly to her, then walked over, taking the box off of his back. Yushiro watched him closely, making sure he didn't get too close to Tamayo.

"You've brought another demon," Tamayo observed. Tanjiro nodded, opening the box.

"So you weren't kidding," Yushiro said as he looked into the box where Giyuu was sitting.

"Come out, Giyuu-san. There's no sun here, so you'll be fine." Tanjiro smiled warmly to the Hashira, who stared back at him hesitantly before slowly crawling out. Once out of the box, he rose to full height, looking around the room.

"Giyuu Tomioka... That's the water Hashira." Tamayo looked up at the demon, then at Tanjiro. "You came here for the antidote, correct?"

"Yes. I want to cure Giyuu-san before anyone tries to kill him and before he hurts any humans."

"I see. This situation is quite strange," Tamayo said. "He should've killed you when you found him. I can understand how you got Nezuko under control since she's your sister. But Tomioka is simply your ally, or friend if you'd prefer. It may just be because he's a demon slayer, but I can't say for sure. Even a demon slayer would lose control if turned into a demon." She gazed up at Tomioka, a light layer of confusion glazing her eyes.

"I'm not even completely sure what happened back there," Tanjiro said with a nervous laugh. "But I could tell Giyuu-san was

struggling to keep himself under control," Tomioka observed the room as they spoke, but then stopped when his eyes landed on Yushiro. Tilting his head slightly, he walked a little distance towards the other demon.

"Don't come near me," Yushiro said sternly when he noticed the Hashira approaching him.

"Now, now, Yushiro. Don't speak rudely to our guest. Do remember that this is the water Hashira, too."

"Y-Yes Lady Tamayo!" Yushiro looked up as Tomioka stopped in front of him, inspecting him closely.

"G-Giyuu-san, come back please," Tanjiro said nervously, looking over at the two. Tomioka turned his head when he heard Tanjiro say his name. After a few moments of standing in silence, he walked back to the demon slayer. Before he can get back beside Tanjiro's side, Giyuu stopped, swayed a little in place, then collapsed. "Giyuu-san!" Tanjiro lunged forward to catch the Hashira before he landed on the floor. Tamayo observed silently for a moment before speaking again.

"Tanjiro, please lay him on this bed." Tanjiro nodded, quickly carrying Giyuu over to the bed.

"Tamayo-san, do you know if he's okay?" Tanjiro asked with a worried voice. He gazed down at the unconscious demon.

"He'll be fine, I believe he just fell asleep," she replied calmly. Reaching a hand out, she gently touched Giyuu's forehead. "It's hot," she reported. "It seems he overworked himself. Yushiro, please bring me a cloth, along with the antidote."

"Right away!" The demon boy turned and rushed away, arriving back only a few moments later, a cloth in one hand, and a vile of liquid in the other. He walked over to Tamayo, handing her both items. She took them and gingerly placed the vile on a desk-like area that was beside the bed. Standing, she walked out of the room then returned back with the cloth wet. She sat back on the chair and placed the carefully folded wet cloth on Giyuu's forehead.

Tamayo then grabbed a syringe from the desk, opening the vile, and inserting some of the liquid into the syringe.

"Tanjiro, do you know where the attacker inserted their blood into Tomioka?" she asked, looking back at Tanjiro.

"No," the demon slayer replied solemnly. Tamayo turned her head back to Giyuu, inspecting him. From the front, you could see an area in his shirt that was torn, an open wound revealed. The demon gently placed her hand over the wound, inspecting around it. Giyuu groaned quietly in his unconscious state, giving off the sign that the wound was still painful.

"Normally demon blood is inserted through the head, but it seems your friend got it transferred straight to the heart. I'm truly astonished that he lived." Tamayo grabbed the syringe again, bringing it to Giyuu's shoulder. Tanjiro tensed and leaned forward as she pushed the end of the needle into the water Hashira. Tamayo injected the antidote. Now, they would just have to await the results...

Would this successfully turn Tomioka back into a human?

II

[II]

The pillar growled when the needle was poked into his arm, though he did not wake. His hand twitched in the discomfort and slight pain from the object being poked into him. Seeing this, Tanjiro placed his hand over Giyuu's.

"It's alright, Giyuu-san," he whispered, gently holding onto the other's hand. "You'll be human again soon." Giyuu's hand gently gripped Tanjiro's, his body relaxing again. *I hope he isn't out for to long like Nezuko was...* Tanjiro gazed at the pillar with deep concern. Yushiro, Tanjiro, and Tamayo sat in silence for hours, receiving no physical reaction to the antidote. Giyuu remained unconscious, his breathing shallow and his body almost completely motionless. After a long while of silence, Tanjiro stood again.

"Tamayo-san, I'm going to go get Giyuu-san some food," he declared.

"Oh, but Tanjiro, demons don't need food."

"I know, but I want to give Giyuu-san as much of a normal life as possible, even as a demon. Plus, maybe this'll wake him back up." Tamayo nodded in understanding. She and Yushiro watched as the demon slayer walked out of the room. He quickly left the building, only to be greeted a few moments later by Muichiro.

"Muichiro-san! Hello!"

"Hey Tanjiro." The mist pillar smiled at the sight of his friend. "Master Ubuyashiki asked me to get a report from you on Tomioka's condition, so I came here to find you."

"Oh, ok. Tamayo-san has given him the antidote, but so far nothing has changed. He's currently asleep too."

"Thanks for the report, Tanjiro," Muichiro said with a warm smile. "I'll make sure to tell the Master. Where are you headed now?"

"I was just about to get Giyuu-san some salmon with daikon," the red-haired boy replied. Muichiro tilted his head.

"But I thought demons didn't need to eat human foods."

"I know, but I want to give Giyuu-san a life as close to a humans as possible for however long he's a demon."

Muichiro gazed at Tanjiro for a few moments then another smiled appeared on his face. "That's so like you, Tanjiro." Muichiro stared at Tanjiro with admiration. "Well, I'm going to take this information to the master now. You take care of Tomioka-san, alright?"

"I will! I promise I'll return him to human!" At this, Muichiro and Tanjiro parted again. Tanjiro hurried on to the nearest place where he could get the food for Giyuu. After he got the simmered salmon with daikon, he headed back to Tamayo's place. Once he got back to the room Giyuu was in, he noticed Yushiro standing beside Tamayo, watching as she aided Tomioka. The demon turned his head when he heard Tanjiro enter.

"Back already," he said in a somewhat annoyed tone before walking away from the bed. Tanjiro walked back to the bed without responding, sitting back down in the chair. Tamayo straightened herself so she was no longer leaning over Giyuu.

"Giyuu-san, I'm back," the demon slayer said softly, cupping one of his hands over Tomioka's. With the other he set down the bento box that he had put the food in. "I brought you something. Please wake-up, Giyuu-san." Tanjiro heard Giyuu's breathing steady, and felt the pillar's hand twitch under his own. Giyuu softly gripped Tanjiro's hand, his eyes slowly beginning to open. Tanjiro smiled, a small laugh of relief escaping his mouth. Giyuu gazed up at him, staring with such admiration, and something else too. A deeper feeling, and a stronger one too.
"Are you hungry, Giyuu-san?" Tanjiro grabbed the bento box, opening it to reveal the food. Giyuu slowly sat up, Tamayo watching him closely to make sure the wound didn't become worse

from the movement. Once he realized what was in the box, Giyuu's eyes shone, and he reached out a hand towards the food. *It seems like he still really likes this food, even as a demon. Or at least, he likes the sight of it*, Tanjiro noted mentally.

"Tamayo-san, is it ok with you if I take the muzzle off so he can eat?" Tanjiro asked.

After a moment of deciding, Tamayo nodded. Tanjiro set the food in his lap then reached his hands around Giyuu's head, un-tying the muzzle. He removed it completely then set it aside. With the opportunity to attack, Giyuu's pupils became slits, but he quickly shook his head, refusing to give in to the temptation to attack. He looked back up at Tanjiro, the peace returned back to his eyes.

You would never hurt him.

The words echoed in Tomioka's head. He looked down as if disappointed in himself for even *thinking* about harming the other boy. "Giyuu-san, it's ok. Don't be harsh on yourself." Tanjiro spoke softly to him. He had smelt the guilt and disappointment coming from Giyuu. Reaching his hand forward, Tanjiro gently caressed the demons cheek. Giyuu looked back up, startled and slightly embarrassed. "Let's eat, ok?" The boy smiled warmly at the demon. He received a nod as response. Tanjiro then started feeding Giyuu. The demon had a hard time using the utensils himself in this demon state, so that's why Tanjiro ended up feeding him instead.
"You really like this, don't you, Giyuu-san?" Tanjiro asked as he received another delighted "Mmnn!" from Giyuu. The water pillar was smiling. Something he didn't do often. It was actually Tanjiro's first time seeing Giyuu smile. He seemed delighted, and even more so since Tanjiro was there with him.

"He gets along with you so well, like with Nezuko-chan," Tamayo commented, smiling warmly at the two boys. "It makes me curious..." Her voice trailed off before she can finish her thought. Tanjiro finished feeding the shrimp and daikon to Giyuu. Noticing the food surrounding his mouth, Tanjiro quickly wiped it off, Giyuu stiffening at the touch. Tanjiro then tied the muzzle back onto Giyuu.

"Mnng!" the demon complained.

"Sorry Giyuu-san, but I hate to keep that on you."

"Mmnnn!! Hmph!" *The sounds Giyuu-san makes are so cute,* Tanjiro thought to himself. He pat Giyuu's head, smiling warmly at him. Tomioka gazed back at him for a few moments before lying back down, his head now resting in Tanjiro's lap.

"He seems to act a little more childish in this state," Tamayo pointed out.

"Ah, you're right," Tanjiro agreed as he looked down at Giyuu, who was sleeping again. "I wonder if he restores energy like Nezuko did when she was a demon."

"From what I picked up, he was still as weak and energy drained as before when you woke him," Yushiro said. "So that we can't say for sure."

"True." The demon slayer stared silently at Giyuu. "Tomorrow I should probably go report this all to Ubuyashiki-sama." Tamayo nodded in agreement, staring down at Giyuu.

"If you have anything else you need to do, you can go ahead, Tanjiro. Me and Yushiro will watch over Tomioka for you." Tanjiro remained silent, deciding whether or not he wanted to leave. The silence lingered for a few minutes longer before he spoke again.

"I guess I can go back to the others and see if there are any missions for me," he decided. Tamayo helped him move Giyuu so he was laying back completely on the bed. Tanjiro then stood, said farewell to the two demons, and left the building. Once he entered the butterfly estate, he was greeted by Nezuko and Zenitsu.

"Welcome back, Onii-chan!" Nezuko smiled and walked to his side.

"How is the pillar? Is he under control?" Zenitsu asked nervously.

"Yeah. He's sleeping right now," Tanjiro replied as he gave his sister a head pat. "Has anyone been called to a mission or is everything silent?" Tanjiro asked.

"Everything seems to be silent. There haven't been any demon appearances since the train demon apparently."

"Oh, ok." Tanjiro walked away from the two, seemingly worried about something.

"Onii-chan, what's wrong?" Nezuko looked up at him with concern once she caught up to him again. "Onii-chan?" She grabbed his hand, her eyes glazed with worry.

"Huh? Oh, sorry, Nezuko." The older brother laughed nervously. "Nothing's wrong, I promise."

"..." She continued to stare up at him. "Please don't lie to me, Onii-chan."

"Nezuko, I would never lie to you. There's really nothing wrong. I just-" He was interrupted by a sudden "CAW CAW" that rang out through the air. His crow was seen circling above them in the sky.

"A DEMON HAS BEEN SPOTTED," the crow screeched. "HEAD TO _____ MOUNTAIN IMMEDIATELY!!"

"What?! But it's the afternoon! A demon shouldn't be out at this time of day!" Tanjiro quickly whipped around, running out of the estate premises. "Zenitsu, go get Inosuke, hurry!" Zenitsu ran into the house to go fetch the third person of the trio. "Nezuko you stay here!" Tanjiro rushed in the direction of the mountain. It was the same one that he had tracked Giyuu's scent to. Once he arrived at the base of the mountain, he started charging up, smelling Zenitsu and Inosuke coming up somewhere behind him. Once he got close enough to smell blood ahead, he slowed his pace. *What is a demon doing attacking during the day? It should be dead!* Tanjiro stopped when he saw what looked like a mix of a shrine and a house ahead. A strong scent of blood was seeping out from the inside. He quickly hurried forward, stopping again when he saw the enemy.

Leaning over a death woman's body was a skinny, pale colored demon with messy yellow hair tinted with orange and red. He had scars all across his back, which were lined with red. Tanjiro clenched his teeth angrily at the sight of this demon eating a

human. He ran forward, un-sheathing his blade, ready to decapitate the demon. Noticing him, the demon stopped, and faster than Tanjiro could react, he whipped around, slamming his arm into Tanjiro's side, which sent the demon slayer flying.

"Tanjiro!!" Zenitsu ran over to his friend after making it the rest of the way up.

"No worries! Master Inosuke will avenge your death!!" Inosuke shouted, pulling out his blades and charging the demon.

"Shut up idiot!! He's not dead!!!" Zenitsu shouted angrily at the other boy.

"How fun, but also very rude." The demon was the one to speak this time. Jumping up towards Inosuke, he kicked the demon slayer in his stomach, sending him flying into a tree. "I can see this battle will be very entertaining. But I haven't gotten a chance to introduce myself yet. I'm Oni Kikotei, also referred to as the ' sun demon'. It's very pleasing to meet you all. Tanjiro. Zenitsu. Inosuke. I've heard a lot about you from the souls you freed."

"Who the hell are you?!" Inosuke said as if the demon didn't just introduce himself.

The... souls we freed? Tanjiro slowly stood, trying to ignore the immense pain in his side.

"T-T-Tanjirooo... H-He knows our names..." Zenitsu shook with fear, staring at the demon with even more of it.

"You must be wondering why I'm out during daylight," the demon continued. "Well, you see, I have the ability to stay under sunlight for five minutes before my body is set aflame. Hence why I've been called the 'sun demon'. And before you ask, I am not one of Muzan's demons."

What?! But all demons originate from Kibutsuji except for Yushiro. And Tamayo-san would never create an evil demon like this! Tanjiro exclaimed to himself. The demon was smiling, his black eyes gazing at them all, and his red pupils in slits, as if showing he was hungry

for more human flesh. Now that he was on his feet again, Tanjiro prepared to attack again. Gripping the hilt of his blade, he rushed forward again.

"*Water breathing. Fourth form.* ***Striking Ti-!!***"

"TANJIRO!!!" Zenitsu yelled out to the other, and Inosuke stopped dead in his tracks. The demon was crouched at Tanjiro's side, Tanjiro stopped in place.

"Well, that sure was fun. Which one of you is next?" The demon stared coldly across the battlefield, hand pierced through Tanjiro's stomach.

***

Back at Tamayo's place, the female demon sat in the living room of her space, Yushiro to the right of her, watching as she neatly sewn Tomioka's ripped Kimono back into it's original form. Back in the room Giyuu was lying in, he slept silently. Within only a few moments later, his eyes snapped open, wide and full of alertness. He sat up, looking alertly around the room. Tanjiro wasn't there. He quickly slipped off of his bed searching the room. He found his blade in the corner, but hesitated to grab it. Even though he felt he probably wouldn't use it, he grabbed the blade and attached it to his side like he knew how. Then, he ran out of the room, finding his way around the house until he found the exit.

"Tomioka! You're up," Tamayo said as she looked over at him. He glanced at her and Yushiro before running to the door. Realizing he was trying to leave, Tamayo stood up urgently. "Tomioka wait!" The pillar burst through the door, but stopped immediately when he noticed the sunlight ahead. His new demon instincts told him that the sun was dangerous. Growling in frustration, he ran back, rushing to the back of the house, ripping past Yushiro who tried grabbing him. "Yushiro, please stop him before he hurts himself!" Tamayo asked with a voice full of plea.

"Yes Lady Tamayo!" Yushiro dashed after Tomioka, who was darting through every part of the house, trying to find a new exit. Finding another door, Tomioka launched himself towards in, knocking it

down on contact.

"Stop that this instance! You'll worry Lady Tamayo if you go out there!" Yushiro demanded for him to stop, but Tomioka had no intent to listen. He ran outside using the shadows for cover. Yushiro stopped his chase, knowing Tamayo wouldn't be pleased if he risked going out in daylight. So instead, he went back inside. Giyuu continued running through the shaded areas, avoiding the sunlight. Eventually the protected area he was running through came to a stop. He growled once more. He turned his head in all directions, looking for a way to go. Noticing the shaded area continued to his left, he traveled in that direction. Right. Right again. Left. He continued to avoid the sun while also trying not to get to off-track from his destination.

"Tomioka-san~." The water pillar whipped around at the sound of someone behind him. It was the insect Hashira, Shinobu.

You're a waste of my time, I'm leaving. (Those were the words Shinobu picked up from eye contact.) The demon then turned back around and dashed forward, the pillar following him now, annoyed by his silent remark.

"You know it isn't safe for you to be out here at this time of day, right?" She was ignored. "You should also take note that this is my perfect chance to kill you, so don't take any risks with your silent remarks." She was ignored again. Giyuu didn't like the cold aura that his memories held when she was nearby. He quickly started darting around in all directions, trying to lose her. And eventually he did. Whether she actually lost track of him or decided to leave, he didn't really care. Looking ahead, he noticed he was at the start point of his destination. Another growl escaped him, and he dashed up the mountain, tracking down his target.

I'm coming, Tanjiro. Just hang in there a little longer. I promise I'll save you.

Giyuu hurried up the mountain, keeping to the trees so he avoided the sun. Once he could smell four people- no, three people and a demon- ahead, he immediately prepared to attack. Jumping up to the flattened area, he took a few moments to observe his

surroundings. To the right, Zenitsu was lying against a tree, struggling to get up and with many opened wounds. To the left, Inosuke was recovering from being yeeted against a different tree, and getting ready to charge his opponent again. Then, straight up ahead, Tanjiro was lying motionless with a hole in his stomach, which was bleeding out. A small distance from him stood a demon.

Memories immediately flooded Giyuu. Memories of pain, suffering, hatred, and the presence of evil. The same exact presence this demon gave off. Once landed carefully on the ground, Giyuu raced forward, charging directly at the demon. Noticing him, the demon turned to defend, but by the time he had, Giyuu had torn his arm off. Of course, being a demon, the thing immediately regenerated.

"Huh? Isn't that the half guy who turned into a demon?" Inosuke questioned, stopping his attack.

"Ohoho? What's this? My own creation attacking me?" The demon, Oni Kikotei, looked over at Giyuu, his eyes full of fake disappointment. (In reality he was like douma and felt nothing).

"So.... You're..... The one.... Who.... Turned Giyuu-... san... Into a demon...." Tanjiro said weakly.

"You're still alive? That's quite surprising. Might as well finish you off now." Kikotei leaped at Tanjiro, quicker than lightning, and brought his fist down to the boy's neck, only for his hand to be cut off. He turned his head to see Giyuu, blade in hand, staring at him with pure hatred. Dropping the sword instead of putting it in its sheath, Giyuu charged at Kikotei, kicking his chest and sending him flying back, landing in the sun. Nothing happened. It was just as the sun demon had said, he could not be killed by the sun until five minutes passed. If he was still in sunlight by then, he would burn. Giyuu growled in irritation, knowing that now he couldn't attack, since he himself couldn't survive in the sun.

The opposing demon grinned, then charged back at Giyuu, coincidentally avoiding Inosuke's attack. Zenitsu was asleep. Giyuu was about to attack Kikotei back, but got hit before he could. He was sent flying back into the shrine-like house, crashing into one of the walls. Inosuke aimed another attack at the demon.

"Ino... suke.... wait..," Tanjiro said, which was barely caught by Inosuke's ears. Giyuu got back up to attack again. "Wait... For the... Attack... Then finish... Him... Inosuke..."

"Huh? Waddya mea-... Oh, I see. Gottcha! That was my plan in the first place!" The red-haired boy smiled with confidence.

Now, do it, Zenitsu, Giyuu-san. Finish this demon.

"*Thunder breathing. First form.* ***Thunder clap and Flash; Six Fold!!***"

III

[III]

"*Thunder breathing. First form.* ***Thunder clap and flash; six fold!***"

I.... refuse to be killed by such weak beings!!

At the same moment that Zenitsu launched his attack, Giyuu charged at the demon, ready to try tearing his head off. Zenitsu's attack landed, but not on its exact target. Instead of hitting the sun demon's neck, it simply left a cut on his back, and Giyuu only ended up tearing off another limb, which instantly regenerated. Inosuke charged in immediately after, aiming both blades at the demons neck. The demon grinned.

"**Blood demon art.** ***Blazing hell rods!***" From out of nowhere, dark red shards as thick as a (soda) can formed, igniting themselves in flames and shooting out in all directions. Inosuke ended up having to change his attack to a defensive form to try deflecting all the shards being shot at him. Zenitsu tried running away from some, only to be hit by others. Giyuu was pierced by some, and he and Zenitsu were set aflame. Before any can hit Tanjiro, Giyuu ran over and acted as a shield, making sure not to get to close to Tanjiro so he didn't set the injured demon slayer on fire.

"Grrrr... rrrrgg," he complained, flinching from the pain and the fire.

"G-Giyuu... san..!" Tanjiro gripped the hilt of his sword, slowly trying to stand, but struggling greatly. *I can't let anyone else get hurt!* Tanjiro forced himself up, then set his eyes on his target. *Focus. Use your breathing to stop the bleeding. Build your stamina.*

"*Water breathing. First form.* ***Water surface slash!***" He aimed directly at Kikotei's neck, but the second the blade touched the demon, it was set on fire. Inosuke appeared back and also aimed an attack at the demon's neck. This time, the demon leaped away, disappearing into the house.

"**Blood demon art. *Scorching dragon breath!!***" In a matter of seconds, the house was set a blaze, the stench of burning flesh filling the air, and the sun demon's scent disappearing.

"Damn that bastard! He fled!" Inosuke was clearly disappointed. Tanjiro wasn't paying attention.

"Giyuu-san! Giyuu-san! G-Giyuu-san, please get up!" The boy knelt over Giyuu, who was lying motionless on the ground, bleeding out from the stab wounds an covered in burns.

"Owwwww why does my whole body huuurrtttt." Zenitsu had woken up and immediately started complaining. "It feels like someone threw my body into a- GYAHHHHH WHY IS THAT HOUSE ON FIRE?!?!" Zenitsu began to freak out, but then stopped when he noticed Tanjiro. He quickly ran over. "Tanjiro, what happened?"

"G-Giyuu-san... That demon... We need to get back as soon as possible so Aoi-chan and Shinobu-san can check Giyuu-san's wounds."

"... Aren't you at all worried about yourself?..."

"And you too, Zenitsu! You and Inosuke were also hurt pretty bad, so we need to hurry up and get back!" *Thank goodness the sun is setting. If not, we would have to wait so we could travel without leaving Giyuu-san behind.* Tanjiro stood, lifting Giyuu up and over his shoulder. Tomioka's eyes opened again, and he glanced around to take in his surroundings. Realizing they were still at the battlefield, he jumped back. "Ah-! Giyuu-san you're awake!" Tanjiro turned back to the demon. Zenitsu decided he would go check on Inosuke, leaving to two alone.

"Nnngg..." Tomioka clearly seemed unhappy that Tanjiro was worrying more about him (Giyuu) then himself (Tan). Zenitsu and Inosuke worked in the background to put the fire out. Giyuu walked forward and picked Tanjiro up.

"Ehh?! G-Giyuu-san!!" The demon slayer seemed a bit flustered by the sudden action. "P-please set me down, I can walk on my own, I swear!" *Lies.* Tomioka refused to set him down. Tanjiro was about to

try again but then stopped, looking out towards the sunset. "It's so beautiful from up here," he said in a dazed tone. Giyuu gazed down at Tanjiro, clearly more stunned by him than the view of the sunset. Admiration filled his empty eyes as he stared at the younger demon slayer.
"Giyuu-san..."

"...Hnnmm?"

"Don't you ever wish, it could be peaceful like this forever. Do you think, that one day, the world might finally fall into peace and serenity, with no more fighting. No hate, but only love. No pain, only joy?"

"..." The two fell into silence again. Giyuu stared forward now, thinking of what Tanjiro just said.

"Heh, sorry about that," Tanjiro said after a few more moments of silence.

"Mnngg!!" *(you don't need to apologize)*.

"Tanjiro! Inosuke and I finished putting out the fire, we can go no-" Zenitsu stopped when he noticed Giyuu carrying Tanjiro.

"That's great, thanks! Alright Giyuu-san, we can go home now." Zenitsu stared silently, and Inosuke trailed along in silence as Giyuu began walking back down the mountain with Tanjiro in his arms. It was late by the time they arrived back, and when she saw their conditions, Aoi immediately dragged the four boys into the infirmary room. That night Tamayo came to visit, worried about Tanjiro and still a bit anxious after Giyuu had ran off. She also helped Aoi with treating Tomioka, since he was a demon. By the morning, Tamayo had left back home, and all the major wounds were treated for all four boys. The cut in Tomioka's chest was stitched shut, along with Tanjiro's stomach.

Zenitsu's and Giyuu's burns were currently being treated, while Inosuke simply had a few broken bones to take care of. In the morning, Aoi tried taking Giyuu to a different room to keep him from the sunlight, but he refused to leave Tanjiro's side. So instead

she ended up bringing in the box, which Giyuu stayed in. It was placed right beside the bed Tanjiro was placed on, so Giyuu was satisfied.

Around noon, Tanjiro woke up. *Huh? Where's Giyuu-san...?*

"Oh, you're awake." Aoi's voice was the first thing to reach him. "How are you feeling?"

"G..ood..." Tanjiro looked around without sitting up. "How.. are the others?"

"Zenitsu and Inosuke are fine. You're the one we're worried about. You came back with a hole through your stomach. You're lucky to be alive."

"Heh heh. Sorry to worry you," Tanjiro said apologetically, smiling. "Wait, where's G... Giyuu-san...?"

"He's in the box beside your bed. He was being stubborn and refused to leave when day came, so we put him there."

"Ah, ok. Thanks, Aoi-chan.." Tanjiro rolled over to the left side of his bed, where Giyuu's box was. "Giyuu-san, how are your wounds, do they still hurt?" He gently tapped on the box. There was no response at first but then soon after Giyuu scratched on the box to inform Tanjiro that he heard.

"Mnnn... Nnnnmm.." Tanjiro's smiled returned.

"I'm glad." Judging by the fact that there was no pain in his voice the demon slayer figured Tomioka was feeling fine.

"*sigh* I'm going to get some ointment for Tomioka-san and Zenitsu's burns, don't move from that bed, got it?"

"I won't," Tanjiro replied. Aoi walked out of the room. Tanjiro placed his hand on the top of the box. "Now I see why that antidote didn't work. Maybe it's because that is used for Muzan's demons, but you aren't one of his. That demon... Oni Kikotei, wasn't it? I'll find him, and I'll be the one to take his head," Tanjiro said, anger in his voice.

"Mnng.."

"Wait, Giyuu-san, where's your sword? Did you leave it at the house??"

"....Mmmhmm..." Tanjiro sighed, but not from annoyance.

"Ah! I was supposed to report to Ubuyashiki-sama today! How about you and I go do that tonight, Giyuu-san?" No response, but Tanjiro can smell the happiness on Giyuu, signaling that he did want to come along. Tanjiro rolled back onto his back, closing his eyes. He still felt a searing pain from his stomach, but he ignored it. Since there was nothing else for him to do, he tried sleeping.

***

It was evening, and the sun was setting. Tanjiro had spent the day sleeping and eating, while Inosuke tried getting up and causing havoc. Aoi had stopped him each time, of course. Zenitsu just slept for the whole day. Since the sun was setting, Tanjiro figured it was a good time for him to leave with Tomioka.

"Giyuu-san, come out." He was crouched in front if the box, which was open to reveal Giyuu sitting curled up inside. The water Hashira slowly creeped out, standing once he finished exiting. Tanjiro stood back up. "Ok, lets go to Ubuyashiki-sama now." He gave the demon another one of his pure smiles, then walked out of the room with Giyuu following. Once outside, Tanjiro started leading the way to the meeting area the pillars go to. Giyuu slowed his pace.

"Is there something wrong, Giyuu-san?" Tanjiro stopped and turned to the pillar. Giyuu walked up to him and grabbed his hand, then hugged him gently, holding the demon slayer close.
I want to stay like this forever. Just me and you, Tanjiro...

"Ah, Giyuu-san..." The slayer's voice trailed off. Not knowing what else to do, he just stood there, letting the demon hold onto him. He could smell two strong emotions flowing off the Hashira. Affection, and a deep sadness.
"...Giyuu, why are you sad?" Tanjiro asked, placing a gentle hand on

the pillar's back. He got no response. The silence continued, and eventually Tomioka released the younger boy from his arms. They continued walking, and finally met their destination. The Master and all of the Hashira were already there, waiting for him.

"S-sorry for being late!" Tanjiro quickly rushed over and bowed down to the master. Giyuu stared at Ubuyashiki. Memories of something clam and comforting flooded him, and he felt a deep respect for this man inside him. The water Hashira bowed.

"I'm glad to see you can make it," Ubuyashiki spoke in a calm manner. "We can start the meeting. Tanjiro, I want you to begin. Please, give us your report on Tomioka and his condition."

"Right away! Tamayo-san has given him the antidote, but as of now nothing has happened to Giyuu-san, and he shows no signs of turning back to human. I believe I understand why it didn't work though. Yesterday when I was sent on a mission, I met a demon who's name was Oni Kikotei. He claimed to be the 'sun demon'. He also claimed that he was not a creation of Kibutsuji, and later on when Giyuu-san joined the fight, he admitted to turning him into a demon. What I'm thinking is that if what this demon said is true and he's not one of Kibutsuji's underlings, and if he really is the one who turned Giyuu-san into a demon, then the antidote won't do anything. In order to turn Giyuu-san back into a human, I believe I will either need to get some of his blood to Tamayo-san or kill him." Giyuu looked at Tanjiro, then up at Ubuyashiki, who was gazing down calmly at Tanjiro, listening as he spoke.

"And there's something else too! I know for sure that Giyuu will *never* eat a human! And I'm not saying this just because he's A pillar. When I first found Giyuu-san, he didn't hurt me, even when I was an open target and couldn't get to my blade. Instead, he willingly let me bring him back without attacking or running off. Then, when I was with him at Tamayo-san's place, I had taken his muzzle off, yet he still didn't attack. Finally, when we were out on our mission, there were bodies free to be taken as prey by him, yet he completely ignored them so he could help Zenitsu, Inosuke and I. He didn't even try attack those two when they were bleeding out. These are all chances a human-eating demon would take, but Giyuu-san didn't." Ubuyashiki seemed extremely happy to hear this.

Everyone sat in silence, Giyuu swaying around as if slightly nervous.

"Then how would you like to explain the night you came back," Obanai asked. "That demon was staring at me as if hungry for my flesh and thirsty for my blood."

"Giyuu-san just doesn't like you," Tanjiro declared. "I stick to my words, Giyuu-san would never eat a human." Giyuu looked please with Tanjiro's words, nodding in agreement when Tanjiro said the pillar didn't like Obanai.

This bastard! The serpent pillar thought to himself. When Obanai was about to snap something back at Tanjiro and Giyuu, Ubuyashiki put his finger to his lips, silencing the serpent Hashira and the demon slayer.

"I'm glad to hear about Tomioka's refusal to eat humans. Please do your best to get an antidote that will cure him, Tanjiro."

"I promise I will!"

"Very well. This meeting is dismissed," Ubuyashiki said calmly, gazing down at all the Hashira. They all stood, dipped their heads in respect, then started parting. Tanjiro walked away with Giyuu at his side. On their way back, they ended up running into Rengoku (literally).

"Rengoku-san!" Tanjiro backed up, looking up at the flame pillar. "S-sorry about that!"

"Tanjiro, my boy, its ok! That was a nice speech you gave back there." Rengoku carried his usual smile, staring down at Tanjiro.

"Heh, I hope everyone actually believes me this time though." The two carried on talking, and Giyuu looked over at Rengoku. He was immediately filled with warm, supportive, and encouraging memories. His eyes sparkled a little, and he knew this person was someone he could trust, someone who cared about him. His stepped forward then grabbed Rengoku's hand, placing it on his head as if asking for a head pat.

"Hm?" Rengoku looked at Giyuu with a confused smile.

"Rengoku-san I think... I think Giyuu-san likes you. From his scent, I can tell he views you as his friend," Tanjiro said.

"Ah, I see!" Rengoku looked at Giyuu then gave him a head pat. Giyuu smiled. "I'm honored to know Tomioka sees me as a friend," Rengoku said. "Good luck and take care of him, alright Tanjiro?"

"I will, thanks, Rengoku-san!" Tanjiro and Giyuu began to walk away now, Giyuu still giving of a scent of happiness.

"If you ever need assistance, don't hesitate to visit me, alright?" Rengoku called as the two walked off.

"Okay! I'll be sure to remember that!" Once they were back at the butterfly estate, Tanjiro took Tomioka's box and returned to the room. Zenitsu was there, along with Inosuke, the both of them asleep. Normally Nezuko would be there to greet him, but she was currently in a separate room, sleeping. Tanjiro had Giyuu go back into the box and he lyied himself on his futon, closing his eyes and awaiting sleep.

...

A few minutes past, and Tanjiro was in a really light sleep. Giyuu, not finding the box very comfortable to sleep in, crawled out. He looked around the room, then spotted Tanjiro. He crawled over then lyied behind Tanjiro, wrapping his arms around the smaller boy. This woke Tanjiro, who stiffened with embarrassment when he realized what had happened.

"G-Giyuu-san, why did you come out of the box," he asked in a quiet whisper. His only response was a quiet noise. Tanjiro hesitated to do anything for a few moments then decided he would let it slide. The two stayed lying together, eventually falling asleep.

***

"... Should... Should we wake them up?" Zenitsu was standing over Tanjiro and Giyuu, watching them sleep. Inosuke stood beside Zenitsu, also looking down at the two. In his sleep, Tanjiro had

turned to become more comfortable, so when Zenitsu and Inosuke saw, he was facing Giyuu and had snuggled his way closer, giving the impression that he and Giyuu had been all lovey-dovey towards each other rather than just deciding to sleep in the same area.

"I say we ditch them and go train," Inosuke replied.

"Of course. Of course that's what you say." Zenitsu sighed. "Alright, lets go." Zenitsu and Inosuke left the two alone to go train. About 25 minutes later, Tanjiro woke up. *So warm... Wait-*
The boy quickly sat up, then calmed when he remembered what had happened. Looking around the room, he noticed Zenitsu and Inosuke were gone. His face turned red at the thought of them seeing him with Giyuu.

"G-Giyuu-san, it's morning, you should get in your box." Tanjiro gently placed his hand on the other's cheek, gazing down at him. A moment later, Giyuu cracked his eyes open then looked up at Tanjiro. "We're going to Tamayo-san's place, ok? But first I need you to go into the box, please." After staring at Tanjiro for a moment longer, the demon sat up and walked to the box, crawling inside. Tanjiro walked over and closed the box, putting it on his back. Leaving the room and estate, he headed towards Tamayo's house. Once he arrived, Yushiro let him in.

"Good morning, Tamayo-san!" Tanjiro greeted her once he entered.

"Hello Tanjiro."

"Tamayo-san, I think I know why the antidote didn't work."

"What's your theory?"

"Giyuu-san wasn't turned into a demon by Kibutsuji, as we already know. I found out who turned him into a demon. It was Oni Kikotei, the 'sun demon'. He's A demon who claims to have not been turned into a demon by Kibutsuji."

"The sun demon... I'm afraid I don't know of such a demon."

"I believe we have to extract blood from that demon in order to make an effective antidote. Either that or kill him so Giyuu-san will

be cured."

"I'd prefer if you get blood before you kill him. I would like to make an antidote just in case there are other innocents who have been turned into a demon by him," Tamayo said.

"Ok, I'll do that then." Giyuu opened the box and hopped out, turning to face Tamayo and Yushiro.

"You bastard!" Yushiro immediately became angered at the sight of Giyuu. "You got Lady Tamayo worried out of her mind yesterday!" he snapped, walking up to physically confront Giyuu.

"Now, Yushiro, don't hurt our guests," Tamayo ordered, in a strict but still kind manner.

"Yes Lady Tamayo!" Yushiro returned to the female demon's side. Giyuu stared blankly at him.

"Sorry about that," Tanjiro said nervously.

"I assume Tomioka went out because you were in danger," Tamayo asked.

"Yeah, I think that's what happened. I was fighting the sun demon, and I managed to get a pretty bad wound."

"Yes, I saw. He left a hole through your stomach. I'm impressed that you're alive. Also, I have Tomioka's haori in the room. It was ripped, so I figured I would sew it back together for him. I'll go get that for you now." Tamayo stood and walked deeper into the house, coming back a few moments later with Giyuu's folded haori. The rips were sewn back together and it was washed so the blood was gone.

"Thank you, Tamayo-san!" Tanjiro walked forward and grabbed the haori, then walked to Giyuu and helped him put it back on.

"Figuring you'd come, we prepared food for the two of you," Yushiro said, staring at Tanjiro.

"Thank you so much! You really didn't have to!"

"It's our pleasure," Tamayo said with a smile. She then led Tanjiro and Giyuu to a room with a table that had food on it. Giyuu and Tanjiro sat next to each other, the demon slayer taking the muzzle off of Tomioka. All four ate together, A little conversation popping up here and there. By noon, Tanjiro had left, promising to return with the blood for the antidote.

"Onii-chaaaannn!!" Nezuko came running to him then immediately attached herself to him with a hug.

"Nezuko, how have you been?"

"Fine, other than the fact that I haven't talked to you in over a day." She looked up at him with pure concern in her eyes. "I heard you got a really bad wound, I was really worried, Onii-chan."

"I'm sorry Nezuko. But I'm all better now, I promise."

"I'm glad," Nezuko said, hugging him a little tighter. Tanjiro continued walking, now with Nezuko at his side. They continued talking until Tanjiro reached his destination, then they parted again with promise to visit soon. Tanjiro made his way over to the bathhouse for males.

"You can come out now, Giyuu-san. There's no sunlight here." Tanjiro was standing in the darkest corner of the room, the box sitting in front of him. Giyuu pushed it open and crawled out, facing the bath. He stared at the water for a few moments before trying to jump in.
"Giyuu-san!!" Tanjiro lunged forward and pulled the water pillar back before he could get in. "You can't just go in there clothed!"

"Mmnnn! Nnnnmm! Hnnnn!!" Giyuu struggled, trying to get closer to the water. Tanjiro pulled him back and tried holding him back but was struggling since Giyuu was both bigger and stronger than him.

"Come on, Giyuu-saaannn...!!" Tanjiro pulled Tomioka towards the changing room. With a reluctant "hmph", Giyuu let the other male drag him to the changing area. Tanjiro hesitated with his task for a moment. *Giyuu-san is a demon, so its not like he actually needs to bath,*

I don't think... No! Stick to your job! You said you would give him as much of a human life as you could while he was a demon. Tanjiro quickly began helping Giyuu with de-clothing himself before the two walked back out, Giyuu immediately entering the bath.

"You seem so at peace, Giyuu-san," Tanjiro said, smiling. He walked to the edge of the water and knelt down. "Y-you don't mind if I wash you, do you?" he asked nervously. Giyuu blinked at him then shook his head as if saying that he didn't mind. "O-okay, I'll be right back." The demon slayer disappeared back into the changing room. While he was gone, Giyuu struggled to pull off the muzzle, wanting to remove it since he found it uncomfortable. Once Tanjiro came back out, he walked over to the edge again. "Ah, Giyuu-san, do you want me to take that off?" The demon nodded. Tanjiro untied the muzzle and put it aside, then stood back up to enter the bath. In the process, he misplaced his foot, causing him to slip. Giyuu immediately tried catching him, though that only resulted in him being knocked over.

At that same moment, Zenitsu had came and entered the bathhouse, only to walk into a sight that was sure to cause a huge misunderstanding.

IV

[image] [image] [image] [image]

[IV]

If it weren't for Giyuu's struggling to get his head surfaced, the situation would've looked completely different than it was. Zenitsu just stood silently at the door, watching and debating if he should just leave. Once Tanjiro was able to sit up straight, Giyuu surfaced his head.

"S-sorry Giyuu-san!" Tanjiro looked at the water pillar apologetically, then turned his head when he noticed Zenitsu's scent. "Zenitsu!" Realizing that his friend most likely saw what just happened, Tanjiro looked down with embarrassment.

"Should I... Leave?" The blonde-haired boy stared at the demon and his friend, still trying to process what he walked into.

"N-No! It's fine! I- I was just bathing Giyuu-san," Tanjiro explained quickly. After another moment's worth of hesitation, Zenitsu walked in, immediately walking into the changing room. Tanjiro turned back to Giyuu and began washing him, his cheeks still tinted red. When Zenitsu arrived out, he went to a separate area, leaving the two alone in their bath. As he was being washed, Giyuu gazed at Tanjiro, admiring him (allow your imagination to decide which areas ;3). Tanjiro noticed this after a while but decided not to comment on it.

"So Giyuu-san, do you want to go see what the other pillars are doing when we finish here?" Tanjiro asked, trying to distract himself from his task. Giyuu raised his gaze to the demon slayer's face, debating if he should agree to or not. After a little while, the demon decided it might make Tanjiro happy if they did, so he nodded his head. "We can do that then," Tanjiro said with a smile. "Though, if they're hanging out outside, you won't be able to join," he continued, a little sadness in his voice. Giyuu didn't really mind if it came to that, since he wasn't close to any of the other pillars

anyway. "I'm sure it will be fine!" Tanjiro's optimism shone through his doubt. Finishing washing the Hashira, he left the bathhouse after drying off and redressing. Sniffing the air, he noticed the scent of Shinobu and the other pillars nearby.

A lucky coincidence! He thought happily to himself. Since they were in a area where there wasn't sunlight, Tanjiro wad able to walk through the butterfly "mansion" with Giyuu by his side.
"Shinobu-san!" Tanjiro turned the corner, stopping at the entrance to the room he had scented the others in. Looking inside, he could see all eight Hashira aside from Himejima, along with Makio, sitting in a circle with a bottle in the center. Inosuke, Kanao, and Aoi stood in a corner, watching. Hearing her name, Shinobu turned her head.

"Hey Tanjiro! Would you like to join us?"

"Sure, but, what are you doing?"

"I invited the others here for a game," Shinobu replied, smiling "innocently" at Tanjiro.

"Sounds fun!" Tanjiro walked over, his innocence shining. Giyuu walked by his side, holding the other boys hand as a slightly romantic gesture. Rengoku and Uzui inched away from each other to make room for Tanjiro. Tanjiro sat down, Giyuu sitting behind him and resting his head on the demon slayer's shoulder.

"Shouldn't we allow Tomioka to join, too?" Rengoku asked.

"I don't think it's a very good idea to let a *demon* join," Shinobu replied. "And Tanjiro, I've noticed he's beginning to warm up to you quite a bit." She stared at Giyuu lying his head on Tanjiro's shoulder.

"Giyuu-san may be a demon, but he still carries the actions and kindness of a human," Tanjiro protested, not commenting on the second thing she said.

"I say we let him join," Rengoku said, mostly because he didn't want Tanjiro to be upset if Shinobu refused. After a moment or so of silence, Shinobu spoke up again.

"Fine, I suppose he can join in," the insect pillar decided. The circle widened again, making just enough room for Giyuu to sit beside Tanjiro.

"So what's the game we're playing Shinobu-san?" Tanjiro looked over at the girl in question.

Mitsuri fiddled in her area nervously. "Two more boys have joined, this is so nerve racking..."

"We're playing spin the bottle!" Shinobu declared.

"How do you play," Tanjiro asked innocently.

"Welll, you spin the bottle, and whoever it lands on is the lucky person!"

"Lucky?"

"Yep, let us demonstrate! Rengoku-san, would you like to take the first turn?"

"Of course!" the flame pillar replied. He placed three fingers on the bottle then spun it. It spun around quickly for a few seconds before slowing down, and eventually stopping. When it became motionless again, it was pointing to the person on Tanjiro's left; Uzui.

(Btw I didn't choose I just used a random name picker thing so plz don't kill meh TwT)

Makio, Uzui's wife (yes thanks captain obvious), stared silently at the bottle, then up at her husband, then at Rengoku. Tanjiro just sat silently, confused. After a minute or two of silence, Rengoku stood, walking over to Uzui, then leaning over to him. Getting back onto his knees since the other Hashira was sitting, he leaned forward and gave the other boy a soft kiss, directly on the lips.
(

And I present to you this fanart not done by me but found on Pinterest :D)

After staying intertwined for a few moments, the two parted,

Rengoku quickly returning to his place in between Giyuu and Obanai.

"And that's how you play!" Shinobu exclaimed cheerfully.

"I-I see, okay!" *So... you have to kiss the person it lands on?!* Tanjiro looked around at the others nervously. Everyone around him seemed completely relaxed, aside from Uzui and Rengoku.

"Obanai-san, it's your turn!" Shinobu smiled at the serpent pillar, encouraging him to spin the bottle. Zenitsu entered the room during this, standing with Inosuke and the girls. Obanai reached his hand out and spun the bottle. It took its turn of spinning rapidly before coming to a stop facing Mitsuri. Obanai tensed. Mitsuri's face became red at the thought of being kissed by Obanai. Tanjiro watched nervously, grabbing hold of Giyuu's hand subconsciously. Obanai stood and slowly made his way to his crush. Instead of taking off his mask, he simply pulled her to him and gave her an affectionate kiss on her head.
(Another fan art not done by me and found on Pinterest :D)

Even though it wasn't on the lips, the kiss still caused Mitsuri's face to turn a bright red, and she immediately hid it when he walked away. Once the serpent pillar was seated beside him again, Sanemi spun the bottle. It landed on Makio, and he immediately spun again. They all knew Uzui wouldn't let any of them kiss his wife. After the bottle stopped again, it was pointing at Shinobu.

(Again, I didn't choose this one,
the name picker did QwQ)

Tanjiro's nervousness grew knowing how Sanemi was. The pillar sighed, then stood up and walked over to Shinobu. Kneeling down, he leaned forward and kissed her cheek. Afterwards he quickly hurried back to his spot, passing the turn onto Mitsuri. She spun the bottle, it landed on Obanai (I'm sorry I just can't let them go with anyone else :'D), and she walked up to him. She fidgeted nervously at first then bent down and kissed his cheek before hurrying away and passing the turn onto Muichiro.

So far Rengoku-san is the only one who has went for the lips, Tanjiro

noted to himself. Muichiro spun after a moments worth of hesitation. It landed on Rengoku.

(also not my decision. And before anyone says anything, in Japan you need to be 13 years apart for it to be paedophilia from what I've heard so this is completely legal).

Muichiro hesitantly stood up, walking slowly towards Rengoku. Once he got close enough, he got down to his knees, crawled the rest of the way forward, and planted a kiss on Rengoku's lips. Tanjiro stared at the two in surprise, for he would have thought that Mui would do something else like kissing Rengoku's cheek or forehead. Muichiro silently returned to his place, and it was Makio's turn. Without even spinning the bottle, she crawled over to Uzui and kissed him, the sound pillar returning it. After the few moments of the two lovers being interlocked in a kiss, Makio had returned back to her previous position.

It was Shinobu's turn now. Still smiling, she reached her hand out and spun it, watching as it spun rapidly in circles. As it slowed, she tracked where it would stop. When its spinning came to an end, it was pointing at Giyuu.

"Oh, so Tomioka-san will be my lucky one~." Shinobu approached the water pillar, who began to growl quietly in protest as she got closer. Tanjiro tensed, unsure if he wanted to intervene or not. "Tomioka-san ~ Don't be shy now~." She stopped when she was in front of him, somewhat above from crawling over his lap. Shinobu saw this as an advantage to both tease him and test if he would try hurting her if he got too uncomfortable. Giyuu was leaned back, not wanting to be any closer to her than he already was. He glanced at Tanjiro for assistance, but Tanjiro just stared nervously at the ground beside him.

Shinobu lifted one hand to reach behind the demon's head so she could take the muzzle off. Giyuu began to growl slightly louder, trying to see that if he made himself seem hostile, if she would go away. But, she didn't. Instead, she leaned over to whisper in his ear. "You won't actually attack, will you? What happened to the good little demon Tanjiro described? You don't want to disappoint your crush, do you? So why not let this happen, Tomioka-san ~." At the

thought of actually disappointing Tanjiro, Giyuu stopped growling, instead just staring at Shinobu and watching cautiously as she began to slip his muzzle off.

As she leaned forward, Giyuu kept still, unsure what to do. At the last moment, Giyuu turned his head away, Shinobu ending up kissing his cheek. She seemed annoyed by this yet didn't say anything, instead moving back slowly and returning to her seat. Tanjiro let out a quiet sigh of relief. Uzui reached out now, spinning the bottle and watching as it slowly came to a stop. It had landed on Obanai. Knowing that route ment death or injury, he spun again. Obanai again. He stared at the bottle darkly, then reached out to spin it a third time. This time it went to Shinobu.

Uzui leaned over to the pillar sitting beside him and kissed her quickly before the turn was given to Tanjiro. He hesitated to spin it, since he knew he'd have to kiss whomever it landed on. After a minute or so of hesitation, he spun it, watching as it spun quickly then came to a stop, pointing at Muichiro. Tanjiro quickly scooted over to Muichiro, who seemed to have gotten quite nervous himself. Giyuu stared, jealousy tinting his eyes as Tanjiro leaned forward to kiss the mist pillar. Thankfully for Giyuu, Tanjiro simply kissed the other's forehead, too shy to go for the lips.

The demon slayer quickly scurried back to his spot beside Tomioka. Since he didn't have memories except for feelings, Giyuu wasn't completely sure what the game was but he figured from what the others were doing he was supposed to spin the empty bottle lying in the center of the group, then kiss whoever the skinny end pointed at. After Tanjiro gestured for him to go, the water pillar leaned forward and spun the bottle. As it began to slow, it seemed as if it'd just come back to Tomioka, but instead it stopped right before him, pointing at Tanjiro. The pillar stiffened a little but then leaded over to the boy sitting beside him, pulling him into a passionate kiss.

(Enjoy dis fan art that is also not done by me and found on Pinterest uwu [and pretend Giyuu is a demon in it])

Tanjiro's face became red, but he didn't refuse the kiss. It lasted what felt like an eternity (due to the silence), mostly because of Giyuu not wanting to separate from the boy he loved. After awhile,

though, their lips parted, everyone in the room just staring at them.

"Ara ara ~" Shinobu commented, breaking the silence. Tanjiro stared intensely at the ground, not sure of what to say. He quickly grabbed the muzzle from the ground, tying it back on Giyuu, though it was basically pointless. "That was fun. Anyone want to do a second round, or play another game? If not then you're more than welcome to return back to your duties," Shinobu said to the others.

"I'll take my leave," Obanai said, standing up and walking out of the room. Mitsuri jumped up and quickly followed him. Sanemi stood and left without a word. Uzui and Makio left after having a short and friendly talk with Shinobu. Muichiro stayed, gazing over at Giyuu and Tanjiro, while Rengoku had begun speaking to the insect Hashira.

"W-we should go, Giyuu-san," Tanjiro suggested, not looking at the demon. Tomioka stared at him then nodded with a "mhm". " Muichiro, is there something wrong? " Tanjiro asked after noticing the mist pillar staring at him.

"No," he replied in his normal, almost emotionless voice. He then stood up, gave Tanjiro a smile, then left after waving goodbye to Shinobu and the four standing in the corner. Rengoku was still conversing with Shinobu. Zenitsu walked over to Tanjiro and Giyuu.

"Where are you going now?" Zenitsu debated if he wanted to comment anything on the kiss.

"Just back to our room, I might go out to train," Tanjiro replied.

"Oh, ok. Well if you do decide to train me and Inosuke will be outside doing the same."

"Okay! I'm going to go now, see you later, Zenitsu!" Tanjiro quickly hurried away with Giyuu. "We should look for that sun demon soon," Tanjiro said to Giyuu. "Let's go get your box so we can go outside." Tanjiro made his way back to the boy's washroom, where he had accidentally left the box. Going in, he took the box and quickly left. Giyuu went inside the box, and Tanjiro went outside

with him. The red-haired demon slayer walked around aimlessly, deciding if he wanted to go train with the other boys or not.

"Oh right, Nezuko and I were supposed to return home soon since she's been human again for awhile now. Guess I forgot," he said to himself with a nervous laugh. "Well I suppose I'm staying here for awhile longer. Plus I think I'd like to wait until we defeat Kibutsuji for me to leave."

Can't you stay here forever?

"What do you think, Giyuu-san? How long should I stay here with the demon slayer corps?"

Forever.

Tanjiro laughed to himself. "Well I suppose you can't respond in your state, can you?" He looked down. "I swear I'll cure you, Giyuu-san." The boy walked in silence now. He continued for about an hour before slowing his aimless pace. Sighing, he looked ahead. When he did, he froze. A pale figure stood a little distance away from Tanjiro, a figure he recognized. The person gazed at him with their warm, gentle eyes, a smile on their face.

"S-Sabito?" Tanjiro stared ahead at the spirit. "You came again..."

"Hello, Tanjiro," Sabito greeted, his voice gentle and calm. "It's been awhile since my last visit. I have come to ask something of you."

"Okay, what is it?"

"I.... Need you to take care of Giyuu for me. Since I, clearly, didn't do my job well enough." A hint of sadness gleamed in the boy's soft, lavender eyes.

"Sabito..."

"Please do everything you can to cure him, and don't let any other demon slayers hurt him. Please, Tanjiro, promise me you will?"

"I..." There was a moment of silence. "I will! I swear I'll do everything in my power and more!"

Sabito smiled, though his sadness shone through his "happy" smile. "You know, I really cared a lot about Giyuu. He and I were good friends, when I was alive. But I guess my care and our friendship wasn't enough to keep him safe even with me in the afterlife."

"I'm sorry," Tanjiro murmured, not sure of what else to say. "How was it, when you were alive? I-if you don't mind me asking."

"It was wonderful. I loved having the ability to protect those around me. All of my friends, everyone, as long as they're an innocent being threatened, I'll protect them. But..." His voice trailed off.

"You never made it past final selection," Tanjiro finished staring done sadly.

"Yeah." The spirit looked up at Tanjiro again. "Well, I should... Go now. I don't have much time to spare here anyway, being... dead and all." Sabito muttered the last three words.

"O-ok! Take care, Sabito, and visit again sometime, if you can."

"I will, no worries. Be careful when you go up against that sun demon. Though, you might not have to worry about him."

"What do you mean?" Tanjiro tilted his head.

"Kibutsuji might be after him. Since you cured Nezuko, there is no other demon he can eat to try conquering the sun. Except for Kikotei. So if you wish to slay him yourself, you should act fast."

"Right..."

"Farewell, Tanjiro. Try to keep that promise, alright?"

"Okay! I will! I don't break my promises." Tanjiro gave the deceased slayer his warm, innocent smile. Sabito smiled back, then his figure began to fade. Tanjiro watched, a little sad that the other had to go. He wondered when he would see him again, spacing out for a moment as he got lost in past experiences. It took him a few moments to notice the new scent behind him. He turned quickly thinking someone was behind him. Then he realized the scent was coming from the box, from Giyuu.

It took him another moment but he heard a sound. Then he snapped. It was sadness he smelt on Giyuu. And the sound... "Giyuu-san..."

He was crying.

Ok ok ok, I know that last part is very out of character for Giyuu, but we'll just say when he became a demon he also became more open to emotions :p

I'm sorry if anyone else seems out of character, but uh if ye haven't noticed I'm kinda sorta bad a writing so... Yea I'll leave it at that, thanks for the reads and votes~

- Admin

V

[V]

"Giyuu-san!" Tanjiro quickly pulled off the box, concerned for the male inside. He was about to open it when he remembered Giyuu was a demon and couldn't be brought out during daylight. He swung the box back onto his back and went to the nearest building. Entering the shade close to the entrance, he opened the box, looking inside. "Giyuu..." The burgundy-haired boy reached his hand in, softly caressing the Hashira's cheek, which was moist from his tears. Getting closer to the box, he reached his arms in and hugged Giyuu. "I'm sorry you had to hear that," Tanjiro said softly. The boy remembered a conversation he had with Giyuu, A short one, and it was about the pillar's past. Tanjiro knew from that conversation that Sabito and Giyuu were very close friends when Sabito was alive.

Tanjiro stayed embracing Giyuu for minutes longer until the water pillar's tears stopped falling. They both stayed there in silence for awhile, until Tanjiro finally stood and placed the box on his back again. He headed in the direction of Tamayo and Yushiro's home, arriving within thirty minutes or so. Knocking on the door, he was let in by Yushiro.

"Hello Tamayo-san, Yushiro!" Tanjiro gave his friendly smile as a greeting. Yushiro didn't respond and just returned to Tamayo's side.

"Hello Tanjiro," Tamayo said softly. "Is there something you need?"

"Yeah, I was wanting to ask if you and Yushiro can help me with something."

"And what might that be?"

"I need help finding the sun demon. I really want to turn Giyuu-san back into a human."

"We can try to help, if we can figure out how to," Tamayo replied.

"Thank you Tamayo-san! One more thing," he said hesitantly.

"?"

"Do you mind if Giyuu-san and I stay here for the night?" Yushiro didn't seem too pleased with the idea, but stayed silent.

After a moment of decision, Tamayo replied with "Of course."

"Thanks again, Tamayo-san!" Tanjiro walked back to the guest room he knew they had, setting down the box and closing the curtains to shield Giyuu from the sunlight. Opening the box, he reached his hand out.

"Come out, Giyuu-san. It's safe in here," Tanjiro said in a comforting voice. Tomioka took the slayer's hand and pulled himself out, growing to full size. The demon then went to the bed, laying down then beckoning for Tanjiro to join him.
"But it's only noon," Tanjiro said.

"Mmm! Hmmnn.."

The burgundy-haired boy stayed silent for another moment longer before walking over. "Okay, I guess it won't hurt to take a nap.." Tanjiro crawled into the bed and lay beside Giyuu, trying not to think about the fact that he was sleeping in the same bed as the other. Plus, they were both boys, so this was normal, right? Once Tanjiro was lying down, Giyuu turned to him, cuddling up close. Tanjiro was shorter than Giyuu, so when the Hashira wrapped his arms around the other and pulled him close, Tanjiro's head ended up resting against Giyuu's chest. After getting comfortable, Tanjiro curled in the pillar's arms and fell into a light sleep.

***

"Tanjiro... Tanjiro..! Tanjiro!" Tanjiro sat up, opening his eyes and looking around to see who called him. When looking around, he observed that it was daytime, and he appeared to be in some sort of nature filled area. He had been resting on grass in a patch of sunlight. *How did I get here?* Looking to his right, he spotted the one

who had been calling to him.

"Giyuu-san?! The sun's out, you should be in th-" He stopped when he realized that he was facing the human Giyuu.

"?"

The demon slayer stared at the other male in astonishment before standing up, running to the pillar, and hugging him tightly. "You're human again! B-but how, and when..?" Tanjiro hugged tightly with relief.

"Tanjiro, there's something I want to show you," Giyuu said, separating himself from the other. He then offered his hand, which Tanjiro took. A small smile appeared on the raven's face as he turned and began to lead the younger boy away from the field and into a small forest ahead. The trees were spread apart enough so sunlight could beam through and warm the boys' bodies. The area was peaceful, with quiet singing of birds and a soft breeze blowing through the tree encased area. Everywhere you looked there was nature, bright and beautiful. The place was practically paradise.

Soon enough Tanjiro heard running water in the distance. Within a few more minutes the trees opened up to reveal a huge clearing with a waterfall pouring down into a deep pond.

"Do you like it?" Giyuu asked.

"Y... yeah," Tanjiro replied in a quiet, amazed voice. "Giyuu-san, what is this place?"

"A special place." The raven walked forward again, leading Tanjiro to a rock that was resting a few feet away from the pond. He sat down, Tanjiro sitting next to him. "Tanjiro, I have something I need to tell you," Giyuu said after what felt like an eternity of silence between the two.

"What is it?" The boy turned his head to Tomioka. At the same time, another voice was audible, at first 'fogged over', then it became clear.

"Tanjiro," the voice called. It was female, and familiar. "Tanjiro

wake up." He then snapped that he had been dreaming. Tanjiro noticed everything begin to fade, including Giyuu as he started to wake.

"Tanjiro," Giyuu began. "I li-" He never got to finish. Tanjiro sat up, awake now, back in the room, Tamayo now standing beside the bed.

"G-Giyuu-san..," the burgundy-haired boy muttered.

"Good morning Tanjiro, is there something wrong?" Tamayo asked. "Bad dream?"

"N-no, everything is ok," Tanjiro replied, his smile returning. Tamayo kept her concerned expression for a moment longer before standing up to go.

"You should probably go back to the butterfly mansion, your friends and Nezuko might be worried."

"Ok, thanks for your hospitality, Tamayo-san! But where's Giyuu-san?"

"He went back into the box earlier this morning."

"Oh. Thanks again," Tanjiro said with a friendly smile. He walked over to the box, picking it up then adjusting it onto his back. Giyuu complained softly inside because of the sudden movement. Tanjiro set off, leaving the house and returning to Shinobu's property. After he arrived at the mansion he entered and almost immediately was knocked over by Inosuke.

"Gonpachiro!" Inosuke cheered. "Where've you been?! Did ya go out fighting demons without me?!"

"No, I was staying at Tamayo-san's place for the night. Sorry that I didn't train with you yesterday."

"It's fine! You just gave me a chance to become even more stronger than you! Let's fight now!"

"Sorry, but I'll have to pas-"

"INOSUKE! What are you doing?! You're supposed to be training with Shinobu and Zenitsu right now!" Aoi came storming down the hall, glaring fiercely at Inosuke.

"Heh? Hello Aoi," Tanjiro said, looking over at the Tsundere.

"Oh, hello Tanjiro," Aoi said, her voice relaxing. "Glad to see you're back." She then walked over and grabbed Inosuke's wrist, dragging him away. Tanjiro watched in silence then decided to follow. When the three arrived at their destination, they were in the room where Zenitsu, Tanjiro, and Inosuke had to train once when they had gotten into bad shape. Zenitsu was currently practicing his Thunder Breathing, Shinobu keeping watch. When she was inside, Aoi walked over to Shinobu to talk. Tanjiro took off the box and left to talk to Zenitsu, who seemed extremely relieved that his friend was back.

The three boys trained for hours, eventually taking the training outside. When it was close to noon, Tanjiro left to get them all food. The three boys met up in their room, curtains closed so Tanjiro could bring Giyuu out.

"Tanjiro, are you sure it's safe to take that off of him," Zenitsu asked nervously as Tanjiro untied the muzzle.

"Yes, I know it is. I've taken it off before, and he's never once attacked anyone," Tanjiro replied. Once he finished untying the muzzle he put it aside and walked back to his friends, Giyuu following. Sitting down, he sorted out the food, giving everyone their share.
"Gnpachru lts fight afer ths," Inosuke said with his mouth full.

"Can you not, that's disgusting," Zenitsu complained.

"We can train some more, but I'd rather not fight," Tanjiro replied. Zenitsu stared at Inosuke with disgust before deciding he was done eating.

"I'm going to visit Nezuko-chan," Zenitsu declared.

"Don't get any ideas just because I won't be around," Tanjiro said to

the blonde, giving a threatening smile. He, Giyuu, and Inosuke finished eating, Inosuke immediately left to continue training.

"What do you want to do, Giyuu-san?" Tanjiro turned to the pillar. Tomioka crawled over and leaned on Tanjiro, shutting his eyes as if going to sleep. Tanjiro looked down at him with a warm smile. "I'm curious, what was it you wanted to tell me in my dream?" He didn't get a response. Sighing, he looked up at the ceiling, trying to figure out what it was the water Hashira had tried to tell him.

Tomioka raised his head a little, gazing at Tanjiro with his deep blue eyes. "It can't be anything too important, can it?" Tanjiro's voice trailed off. Giyuu sat up completely and wrapped his arms around the smaller boy, embracing him in a gentle hug. Snapping out of his small trance, Tanjiro didn't react at first, but then hugged the raven back. "You know, you've become really affectionate as a demon," the boy said softly.

No, just a bit braver, Giyuu corrected mentally. The demon opened his mouth to speak, but no words came out, just a soft sound a little like a growl, but with less aggression. He wanted to say '*I've always wanted to be affectionate towards you, I just never had the courage to, always holding on to the fear of being rejected,'* but the words never came out. He held Tanjiro tighter, wanting the special moments between them to last forever.

"You're probably suffering, aren't you?" Tanjiro asked Giyuu. "Being a demon, that's probably the last thing you would ever want. I wonder, if I hadn't gone after Rengoku-san, if I could've saved you. Maybe he would've gotten me instead, and you would be fine. I'm really sorry this happened to you, Giyuu-san."

It's better me than you, Tanjiro. I would never want you to suffer this.

The raven stared at the boy in his arms, love and affection flooding his gaze. Tanjiro then backed away, Giyuu unwrapping his arms at the signal that Tanjiro wanted out. The burgundy-haired boy walked back over to the box, followed by Giyuu. He wrapped the muzzle back onto the demon then Tomioka entered the box.

"I'll train till sunset, then we can stargaze, alright Giyuu-san?"

"Mmm." Tanjiro went back outside and continued to train with Inosuke, going until sunset like he said he would. At sunset he ate dinner with Zenitsu and Inosuke, then went out to find a good spot to star gaze. He had left Shinobu's property and was wandering around when he ran into Rengoku.

"Hello Rengoku-san!"

"Hello Tanjiro, my boy! What are you doing roaming around here, it will be night soon."

"I was going to stargaze with Giyuu-san tonight," Tanjiro explained.

"I see, any luck finding him a cure?"

"No," the demon slayer replied solemnly.

"Well, just know if you ever need anything, I'm here. Don't hesitate to come to me if you need help. I will do everything in my power to help cure Tomioka. He is one of us, after all, and I don't want to lose a good friend. He's A Hashira, too, and we gotta watch each others backs. Tomioka becoming a demon doesn't change the fact that he is a demon slayer. And I have faith in your words saying that he hasn't and won't harm any humans."

"Thank you, Rengoku-san!"

"Of course! You keep working on that and don't ever hesitate to look for assistance when you need it."

"I'll make sure I do, and I will succeed!" Tanjiro smiled with determination and now new hope since he knew Rengoku was going to be by his side. The two parted with a few more words to each other, and Tanjiro continued searching for an area. The stars were coming out now, and Tanjiro didn't want to spend all the time searching instead of gazing. He chose an area where there was a clear view of the stars and took the box off, setting it on the ground. He then opened it, Giyuu crawling out and growing to full size.

"Do you think here is good, Giyuu-san?" Giyuu nodded. Tanjiro sat down, the demon sitting himself beside the other boy. The stars were out now, shining brightly along with the moon. The night sly

was a deep blue, almost black with the still darkening night. A cold breeze was blowing, and it was mostly silent. The only light in the area was the moon and a few torches in a small distance.
"It's beautiful, isn't it," Tanjiro asked in a soft voice. His eyes were glued to the sky while Giyuu's were glued to him.

"Mhm," Giyuu replied quietly. He gazed affectionately at the boy, admiring everything about him. The moon lit up the demon slayer's dark colored eyes and made his hair seemingly glow. Stars reflected in his eyes and the breeze helped in keeping his hair back, his soft skin glowing in the light of the moon. Giyuu crept closer to him, sitting close enough for their shoulders and hands to touch. Tanjiro noticed this and glanced over at Giyuu, who was now looking up at the sky. He smiled and put his hand over the raven's, gripping it softly.

The two sat in silence, gazing up at the dark sky for about an hour. After a while, Tomioka began to feel tired, slowly nodding off into sleep. Seeing this, Tanjiro began to stand up.

"Let's go back to the mansion," Tanjiro said to the raven. Giyuu grabbed the end of his shirt.

"Mmm-mm," he said, clearly not wanting to go back inside.

"Are you sure? If you're tired we should go back in." Tanjiro looked down at Giyuu with slight concern. Giyuu motioned for him to sit back down. After going through some hesitation, Tanjiro did. The raven then lied down, resting his head in Tanjiro's lap.

"Th-this can work t-too," Tanjiro said with a hint of embarrassment in his voice. For a second his cheeks flushed a light red. Relaxing again, he gently stroked Giyuu's head, gazing down with soft eyes. The boy began to hum quietly, A melody he remembered his mother singing to Nezuko, him, and his other siblings when they struggled to sleep. Giyuu's eyes slowly blinked shut, and he fell into a light sleep. Tanjiro continued humming, to himself now, as he stroked the raven's head and occasionally caressed his cheek. Tanjiro began to feel slightly tired too, but knew he couldn't sleep since he had to get Tomioka back into the box before sunrise.

Giyuu ended up sleeping until around midnight, when he started to wake. Tanjiro had occasionally nodded off within the hours but never fully slept.

"Giyuu-san, did I wake you?" Tanjiro asked when he noticed the demon waking up.

"Mmm," Tomioka replied quietly, clearly disagreeing and saying that it wasn't Tanjiro who woke him.

"Okay.. Are you cold? Should we go in now? Or would you rather stay out here?" At that, Giyuu sat up. He noticed Tanjiro was the one who was cold and hugged him to share warmth. He didn't want to go inside just yet; he wanted to stay out here alone with Tanjiro for as long as possible. Tanjiro leaned into Giyuu's arms, accepting and bringing in the warms of the other boy. Tanjiro decided not to ask anymore questions and instead rested silently in Giyuu's arms, accidentally falling asleep. He slept peacefully for hours, but only three since Giyuu had to wake him up before sunrise.

"S-sorry!" Tanjiro frantically apologized for falling asleep on Giyuu, though the demon didn't seem to take the apology since he found it unnecessary. Readjusting to the dark surroundings, Tanjiro got out of Giyuu's grasp to walk around a bit. It wasn't long before he returned to the demon's side. Sitting down, he looked back up at the sky. The moon was in a different position now, but the night sky was still beautiful and the area was still very peaceful.

"We should go stargazing more often," Tanjiro declared to the raven. Giyuu nodded, scooting next to the other male again. They stayed by each other's side, watching the moon move until it began to get closer to sunrise. Around that time Tanjiro got back up to get the box, ending up wandering around after forgetting it was right by the area in which he and Giyuu had been sitting. Since he was tired, it took him awhile to realize where the box was, Giyuu just silently watching him wander around and look for something that had been right beside them the whole time.

"Sorry about that Giyuu-san, guess I must be really tired." Tanjiro chuckled nervously, smiling apologetically at Giyuu.

"Hmmm," the pillar replied in an unamused voice. Tanjiro walked back over and sat down again, putting the box beside Giyuu so he could get in whenever he needed.

"Giyuu-san, there's one thing I think I need to tell you," Tanjiro said, a hint of nervousness in his voice. "Now may not be the right time, with you being a demon and all, but I still think I should let you know.

"Hmm?" The raven looked at the slayer, tilting his head. Tanjiro fidgetted nervously with his shirt, staring intensely at the ground. Gulping down most of his uneasiness, he turned his attention to Giyuu. His cheeks were a light rose red color that wasn't too visible in the moonlight. Taking in a breath of courage, Tanjiro finally managed to speak.

"I- I... I really like you Giyuu-san!"

Sorry for the two week late chapter :'D. I was very unmotivated last week which is why I didn't upload TwT. But anyway, I hope you enjoyed the chapter, and I would also like to know what other ships you all would like to see in this. Of course GiyuTan will be the main focus but I don't mind having background ships too :)
Any ships that have to do with Tanjiro or Giyuu will be one-sided so if you would like to see any of those too just lemme know in the comments plz :3
Anyhow that's it for now, sorry for the long end note, and thanks for reading, bai ~

- Admin

VI

[VI]

"I- I... I really like you Giyuu-san!"

***

Giyuu stared widely in astonishment, and when the words finally cleared in his mind, his whole face flushed red. He wanted so badly to say something back, but he couldn't. Even if he could, he didn't know *what* to say. Should he tell Tanjiro his own feelings? Or should he just pretend as if the whole thing didn't happen? All he could do now was try to express himself physically, but he didn't.

"I'm... Sorry," Tanjiro muttered, cheeks puffed out with embarrassment. "You should go in the box now," he added, staring at the ground.

"T.."

"Hm?" Tanjiro looked back up quickly. Giyuu shook his head as if dismissing whatever it was he tried saying. *I want to speak to you again,* the water pillar thought sadly. He turned away to crawl back into his box, Tanjiro watching silently. "Sorry Giyuu-san, this was probably a bad idea.." Giyuu turned his head back and growled in disagreement. Tanjiro just smiled and motioned for the demon to go back in the box. With a sigh, Tomioka crawled all the way in, turning to face the exit and watching as Tanjiro shut the box. The burgundy-haired boy swung the box onto his back and made his way back to the butterfly mansion. The second he got to the room he shared with the other boys, he collapsed onto his futon and fell asleep.

It was almost noon when Tanjiro woke up. He was exhausted from staying up almost the whole night. When awake, one of the first things he noticed was the smell of food, then the missing weight on his back. He had fell face first asleep and hadn't removed the box,

but now, when he woke, he noticed he didn't have it. Sitting up, he looked around the room and relaxed when he saw the box in the corner and food at a small table. Only moments later, the peace was broken with Inosuke's yelling. Tanjiro could tell he was running around and yelling at Zenitsu for an unknown reason. Sighing, Tanjiro stood up and walked over to the table, beginning to eat the mix of lunch and breakfast.

"Tanjiro!" Zenitsu came running in the room. "Help me shut this idiot up," he complained in annoyance.

"Good (late) morning, Zenitsu," Tanjiro said turning to face the blonde. "What happened while I was sleeping?"

"Inosuke won't leave me alone," Zenitsu replied, walking to Tanjiro. Tanjiro heard loud footsteps as Inosuke came running down the hall. "He's been challenging me all dayyy," Zenitsu complained. Inosuke came crashing right by the door, though that was already opened.

"HAHA, NOTHING CAN STOP ME," the boar head yelled.

"Inosuke, the door was open," Tanjiro said calmly.

"Moron," Zenitsu said plainly. "You're a moron."

"WAS THAT A CHALLENGE?"

"There's no need for yelling," Tanjiro tried saying nervously.

"Not everything is a challenge!!" Zenitsu glared at Inosuke then sighed in temporary acceptance. "Whatever, I'm going to find Aoi-chan and the others," Zenitsu said, walking away from Tanjiro's side.

"Eh? Where's he going," Inosuke asked as he watched Zenitsu pass by him.

"Maybe you should go with him," Tanjiro suggested.

"That's what I was planning on doing!" Inosuke turned around and ran after Zenitsu, shouting his name as if they were miles away.

Tanjiro turned back to his food and finished eating half of it, bringing the other half over to the box.

"Giyuu-san, you hungry," he asked as he cracked open the box. Giyuu's dark blue eyes stared at him from inside. He sighed, most likely annoyed from the two boys that were previously in the room. "Sorry about that," Tanjiro said quietly after realizing the pillar's annoyance. He slipped the plate in, reaching both hands in afterwards to untie the muzzle. After that fell to the floor, he stepped back to give Giyuu space.

"A- aah," Giyuu said, insisting on being fed as if he were a child.

"O-oh, okay, sure." The demon slayer smiled nervously then began to feed the water pillar.

Giyuu smiled with delight, eyes shining. Once Tanjiro finished feeding the demon, the pillar sighed.

"Something wrong, Giyuu-san?" Tanjiro tilted his head and gazed at the raven, a slight bit of concern in his eyes.

Giyuu shook his head then opened his mouth as if trying to speak. "Trrrrr..." The Hashira growled in annoyance after the failed word. He tried again. "Trrrrr.. Trrrraa.. T-t-t-t-taaaa..."

Tanjiro tilted his head again, this time confused.

"Hmph!" Giyuu complained. He looked down with irritation.

"Giyuu-san..," Tanjiro's voice trailed off. He wasn't sure what to say.

Try again, Giyuu thought to himself. "T-taaa-," there was a short pause in his voice. *Why the hell is speaking suddenly so hard,* Giyuu complained mentally before his voice came back and he was able to continue. "Nnnjj."

Tanjiro jumped up with realization. "G-giyuu-san you're trying to say my name! Right?" Giyuu nodded. With another "hmph" he continued his attempts to speak. Tanjiro watched hopefully whilst encouraging the demon. At one point Giyuu nearly succeeded.

"Taaannjro!" He said, looking back up to meet Tanjiro's eyes. The burgundy-haired boy's eyes were shining.

"You're almost there Giyuu-san! You'll be speaking in no time!" Tanjiro smiled warmly and Giyuu beamed. "We should go out now. I haven't trained with the others in awhile, and I don't wanna fall behind," Tanjiro said with a nervous laugh. Giyuu signed in solemn understanding and crept back into the box, allowing Tanjiro to tie the muzzle back in place. Tanjiro swung the box onto his back afterwards and left the room. Halfway to the door that would lead him to the training grounds, he ran into Shinobu.

"Good morning Shinobu-san," Tanjiro said nervously when he spotted her.

"Hello Tanjiro! I was just looking for you," she said with her usual untrustworthy smile.

"Is there something you need?"

"Yes, there actually is. I was going to ask if I could borrow Tomioka-san tonight, would that be fine?"

"Sure," Tanjiro responded out of instinct, not realizing what he could be getting Giyuu into.

"Thanks Tanjiro! Stop him by my room tonight, all right?"

"Okay-" Tanjiro replied while trying to keep up a cheerful act; he had just realized what he had agreed to. After Shinobu left, he continued to out side, slipping in random "I'm so sorry Giyuu-san"'s here and there. He walked out the door and greeted his friends. "Hey Inosuke, Zenit-..... What-.... Never mind... " Tanjiro walked silently to a shaded area and sat down the box. After he did that, he started training, pretending he never seen a thing. Giyuu, having shrunk his size, paced around frantically in his box after hearing Tanjiro agree to let Shinobu take the raven that night. He wasn't sure what she had in mind, all he knew is it wasn't going to be any good.

***

After hours, Giyuu felt the box being lifted off the ground. He opened his eyes, dark blue gazing into darkness. He had fallen asleep but now was wide awake when he remembered what had last happened. He heard Tanjiro's quick footsteps outside the box, and could tell they were walking through the Butterfly Mansion now. Tanjiro stopped. Giyuu hear the demon slayer knock on a door and call out for Shinobu. He then heard the door slide open.

"Hey, Tanjiro! Thanks for stopping by."

"H-here he is," Tanjiro said cautiously. Giyuu felt the box slip into the air then be placed on the floor. "P-please take care of him!"

"Don't worry, he'll be fine! I would *never* hurt a fellow Hashira," Shinobu said with a smile. She grabbed the box and pulled it inside her room. "Bye Tanjiro~. He'll be returned to you by morning, I promise!"

I feel like this is a really bad idea, Tanjiro thought to himself. "G-goodnight Shinobu-san..." Shinobu shut her door and Tanjiro walked away. He went back to the room to try and sleep. Zenitsu and Inosuke weren't there. Tanjiro decided Giyuu would be fine and shut his eyes for rest. Back in Shinobu's room, she had opened the box and was urging Giyuu to come out. He sat stubbornly in the box, growling at her.

"Come on Tomioka-saaannn ~~ I won't do anything bad, I promisee~~."

Empty promise. Liar. Giyuu glared at her, his eyes repeating the message.

"You see, Tomioka-san, this is why no one likes you and none of the other pillars socialize with you," Shinobu said somewhat bluntly.

Giyuu wanted to correct her and tell here that's where she was wrong but since he couldn't speak properly he wasn't able to. Instead he just grunted and turned his head away from the insect pillar.

"Though, I suppose you're not really a pillar anymore, are you?

After all, a pillar can't be a demon. We kill demons, right, Tomioka-san?"

The raven turned back to her. *But you accepted Nezuko when she was a demon. Is it just different with me because I'm the outcast? Not to mention a pillar, which by the way, I never planned to be. If I could've saved him, Sabito would've been the water pillar. Would you prefer that, Shinobu?* Giyuu sighed knowing that Shinobu heard none of what he said in his head. He decided that hiding in the box all night would be pointless and crawled out, allowing Shinobu to take him out into the bright room.

"Now then, what shall we do first, Tomioka-san?"

***

Early the next morning, Tanjiro woke up to find Giyuu's box beside his head and Zenitsu sharing a futon with Inosuke. He decided to ask questions later and sat up to check the box. Inside was Giyuu, asleep, seemingly untouched, though Tanjiro doubted he spent the whole night hiding in his box. The demon slayer sighed.

"I'm sorry Giyuu-san.. I shouldn't have said yes, you two have never gotten along..." He quietly shut the box and layed back down. He turned to face the other way, closing his eyes again. Not moments later, Giyuu had silently swung the box back opened and crawled half way out. He had managed to untie the muzzle on his own since the knot was loose. After growing back to full size, he lied himself down behind Tanjiro, nuzzling his head softly into the other boy's back, curling up to make this possible.

"T-Tanjiro..," he whispered softly. Tanjiro jumped a little in surprise.

"G-good morning Giyuu-san," the burgundy-haired boy whispered back.

"Mmm," Giyuu mumbled. So far Tanjiro's name was the only thing he could manage to say. Aside from 'Hmph', of course.

Giyuu's breathing slowed, indicating he had fallen back asleep. Tanjiro smiled softly, careful not to move so the demon could sleep.

A little while later, Zenitsu woke up and left to get them all breakfast. The second Inosuke woke up he yelled/complained loudly to Zenitsu for disappearing.

Isn't Zenitsu usually the one to complain, Tanjiro thought with confusion. He sighed, feeling Giyuu sit up behind him, woken up from the yelling. Tanjiro also sat up. When Zenitsu arrived with breakfast, Tanjiro began to feed Giyuu, also noticing that Inosuke was trying to feed both himself and Zenitsu. Zenitsu quickly turned away, seemingly trying to hide embarrassment. Tanjiro gazed at his to friends with a smile. *How cute...* He thought to himself.

"Oh, uh, Giyuu-san," Tanjiro said, turning back to the demon. "Do you want to go for a walk today? I know you can't actually get out but would you want to?" Giyuu nodded. The four boys finished their meals and Tanjiro watched as Zenitsu and Inosuke left together to find something to do. Giyuu crawled into his box and Tanjiro closed it to put it on his back.
"Did Shinobu-san do anything to you," Tanjiro asked Giyuu hesitantly as he exited the butterfly mansion.

"Mm-mm," Giyuu responded quietly.

Tanjiro decide not to say more until later. He made his way to the mountain where he had previously tracked Giyuu. Fog hung low that day, the worst of it being on the mountains. Tanjiro slowly hiked his way up the mountain, keeping his eyes out for any lurking demons since the sun wasn't there to kill the demons. After awhile he stopped and sat down. Pulling the box off of his back he set it down in front of him. With a relaxed sigh, he looked up at the snow white sky. It was slightly cold outside, but Tanjiro didn't mind. He wanted to invite Giyuu out to join him on the mountain but he was scared it would hurt Giyuu despite the fact that the sun wasn't out.

After awhile of silence, Tanjiro decided to speak again. "Giyuu-san, I'm sorry about what I said a few nights ago.. It was sudden, and random... And honestly I know you probably don't feel the same but.... I couldn't hold it back much longer, I had to tell you, I... Sorry, Giyuu-san." Tanjiro stared at the ground. Giyuu cracked the box open slightly and motioned for Tanjiro to come over. Tanjiro nervously came closer to the box and opened it just enough to peer

in. Giyuu leaned forward and wrapped his arms around Tanjiro the best he could, hugging him tightly. The demon wanted so badly to tell Tanjiro he felt the same way but verbally couldn't. Leaning back into the box, Giyuu began to struggle with trying to take the muzzle off. Tanjiro leaned forward and helped the water pillar, undoing the knot and letting the muzzle fall to the ground. Giyuu gazed at him, debating if he wanted to continue with what he was thinking.

Tanjiro was just watching him nervously, not knowing what was on the demon's mind and scared to find out, despite the fact that Giyuu had previously hugged him in a possibly forgiving gesture.

"L-look Giyuu, I-I know you're probably ma-" Tanjiro was cut off by Giyuu. The raven had quickly leaned over, gently kissing Tanjiro. He had done this once before at the butterfly mansion, but that was different. That was a game. That only happened because of a game. But this time it wasn't forced. This time, Giyuu *wanted* to kiss him, and made the decision himself. He wanted to show Tanjiro he loved him, since he just couldn't say it. Both of the boys held a light blush, Tanjiro stiff with surprise. Though, after calming himself down, he simply leaned into the gesture.

The kiss lasted for what felt like an eternity before both the boys pulled away from each other to avoid escalation. Tanjiro moved his gaze back to the ground, to embarrassed and surprised to say anything. Giyuu crept back into the box and put his muzzle back on.

"Thank you, Giyuu-san," Tanjiro whispered. Giyuu smiled, gazing affectionately at Tanjiro. *I guess I was wrong all along,* Tanjiro thought to himself. The boy stood up, closing the box and getting it onto his back again. They headed back and by the time the boys arrived at the butterfly mansion it was lunch time. Zenitsu and Inosuke sat outside eating while two plates of food were in the room waiting for Tanjiro and Giyuu.

The two began eating their lunch but almost immediately were interrupted by Muichiro running through the door.

"Muichiro! What are you doing here?" Tanjiro looked up at the Mist Pillar.

"Tanjiro!" Muichiro was panting lightly from his run there. "Sorry, I had to come here from one of my missions. Anyway, we found signs of that demon you were searching for!" Tanjiro became alert and serious now, his full attention on Muichiro. "I thought it would be okay to tell you. There was a demon attack on that same mountain where you said you found Tomioka-san. The strange thing was the targets were out in broad daylight, still halfway alive."

What?! I was just there and scented nothing! There were no demons aside from Giyuu-san when we went up there, Tanjiro thought frantically to himself.

"Oni Kikotei," Tanjiro said darkly to himself. "I'm coming for you," he murmured. "Thanks, Mui!" Tanjiro thanked him with a small smile. "I'll go check it out."

"You should take someone like myself with you," Muichiro suggested. "Last time you fought this demon you came back with a hole in your stomach."

"I'll be fine! Plus, this is my fight. I'm the one who needs to take this demon down," Tanjiro said, completely serious and confident, seemingly also feeling protective. Muichiro didn't respond. Instead he just gazed with his emotionless blue eyes. A hint of concern shown through them. Tanjiro didn't seem to notice for he was packing up. He loaded Giyuu into the box and grabbed his blade before rushing out the door past Muichiro.

"Be careful, Tanjiro!" Muichiro demanded. The demon slayer continued his rush out the mansion. He started running back towards the mountain, watching cautiously as the mountain grew bigger and he grew closer. Giyuu growled nervously in the box, worried about Tanjiro. He didn't want the younger boy to die. *I won't let that happen.* Giyuu thought to himself. *I'll protect you with my life, Tanjiro Kamado.* The demon declared mentally. Tanjiro stopped at the foot of the mountain. Thankfully the sun wasn't out so Giyuu would be able to fight alongside Tanjiro.

"We're here, Giyuu-san. This time, we won't lose. I won't be killed by this demon, and I will get the blood I need to help you!" Tanjiro stared up the mountain with pure determination. Then, he ran up.

Eventually he caught on to the scent of fresh blood. Running faster, Tanjiro didn't stop until he reached the victims he had scented out. "Are you alright," he asked frantically, holding one of the dying people. *What am I saying, of course they aren't alright!!*

"Well, well, well, look who I get to see again." Tanjiro's eyes darted up at the familiar voice. The sun demon stood in the branch of a tree, staring down at Tanjiro with empty eyes. "Have you come to play some more?" At the sound of Kikotei's voice, Giyuu kicked the box open and jumped out to stand beside Tanjiro, growling fiercely. Tanjiro gently laid the body back down and stood, glaring up at Kikotei.

Tanjiro, there's one thing you need to always remember if I or we die today, Giyuu thought to himself as he remembered the opposing demon's strength.

I love you, Tanjiro. Always have, and I always will.

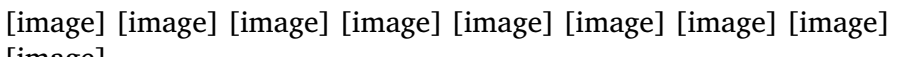
_____ _____ _____

Ahhh I'm so sorry for the super late update!!! I also apologize if this chapter was way worse than the others but hey I tried :D I hope you all enjoyed this and thank you so much for all the support!!!!!

I um will try to add in more solid stuff on the InoZen ship but erm this is what you'll have to get for now TwT Uhh please inform me of any spotted grammatical mistakes, thanks! Anywho, I will try to work on chapter seven soon, byeee

-Admin

DEMON GIYUU GALLERY ✧✧



ˆ Cover art :D

None of the art is mine :3

So ik this probably won't make up for me not posting in months but hey here's some art for you to admire anyway :D Chapter Seven will be out who knows when, bai~

VII

[image]

I love you, Tanjiro. Always have, and I always will.

***

The boy and the demon stood facing their enemy, Tanjiro in a fighting stance, just about ready to attack the opposing entity. Giyuu braced himself, ready to either attack, defend, or take a hit.

"How shall we play today, hm? Maybe we can play a little game together, does that sound fun," Kikotei asked, smiling down at Tanjiro.

"I'm not interested in your games," Tanjiro growled. Gripping the hilt of his blade, he ran forward then leaped up to the sun demon, this time trying to be more aware to avoid his previous mistake.

Kikotei swiftly turned to strike at Tanjiro, though this time the demon slayer was able to block the hit.
"Judging by the way you move, it seems your stomach was healed," the sun demon said emotionlessly. "I can fix that for you, if you'd like," he teased.

Hearing that, Giyuu growled fiercely, making his way to the two.

"I'll be sure you're dead before I let you kill me," Tanjiro snapped, glaring at the demon. Behind Kikotei, Giyuu came striking down, managing to tear into the other demon's back. Kikotei turned just enough to strike back at Giyuu as his wound healed using regeneration. He barely missed the demon, leaving a tiny scratch on Giyuu's neck. Had he struck slightly higher, he would've torn into Giyuu's face. Tanjiro attempted to take this as a time to strike, Aiming for the sun demon's neck to try finishing the battle quickly. Despite having so little space, the demon was able to swiftly duck and turn, avoiding the attack then striking Tanjiro with what would've been an uppercut with claws instead of a fist. Instead he

ended up ripping into Tanjiro's leg, causing the boy to fall backwards off the tree they were fighting on. Giyuu had landed on the ground and immediately ran to catch Tanjiro. After doing so he lied the demon slayer down, looking back up at his opponent, infuriated.

"A-ahh," Tanjiro complained quietly, his voice filled with pain. He attempted to stand, not wanting to sit out of the battle as he did last time. Giyuu growled at him defiantly, clearly wanting for him to stay where he was. *Why is it always Tanjiro getting hurt*, Giyuu thought angrily. *I'm sorry, I was supposed to protect you...* Giyuu looked back up at where his enemy previously was.

"Giyuu-san, look out!" Tanjiro yelled as Kikotei came up on the other demon's side. Giyuu whipped around just in time to block the opponents attack. Growling with annoyance, the water pillar quickly swung his other arm to try landing a blow on his enemy. Kikotei allowed the hit to land, seeming completely unaffected.

Tanjiro watched nervously as he attempted to stand back up on his one good leg. Kikotei continued trying to strike Giyuu, the water pillar doing the same as he defended himself. *I've got to help!* Tanjiro thought to himself. Finally managing to get up, though off balance, he attempted to get in a stance where he'd be able to use a water breathing technique. The burgundy-haired boy tried standing with both feet but immediately regretted moving his injured leg, the pain of a million flaming needles filling his entire leg. *Come onnn, I can't stand out and watch another battle,* Tanjiro complained. He tried moving his leg again, this time attempting Total Concentration Breathing to see if it could help. He focused on the breathing in attempt to ignore the searing pain in his right leg, slowly lowering it until he was standing on both legs, 95% of his weight on his left leg. *Alright, you can do this.*

Taking another breath, Tanjiro prepared his attack. "*Water breathing. Fourth Form.* ***Striking Tide!!***" Tanjiro dashed forward with his attack, landing only a few strikes before tripping and falling because of his injured leg. Giyuu had been launched into a small bush when this happened, Kikotei now standing with half healed cuts. The demon laughed, though no amusement was actually heard in the laugh.

"It was a cute attempt," the sun demon commented, grinning down at the fallen demon slayer. Giyuu slowly got up to the right, regeneration finally working for him and healing the small wounds Kikotei gave him. Giyuu reached behind his head and tryed to untie his muzzle. When he wasn't able to he just used his nails/claws to tear the fabric. He watched with now hungry eyes as the sun demon approached Tanjiro. Giyuu foggily remembered when Nezuko was a demon and used blood demon arts. However, when he tried to bring out that power, he failed. He decided not to try again and just attack since his opponent was too close to Tanjiro. As he charged towards the opposing demon, a deep, demonic growl rose in Tomioka's throat. He was hungry, and pissed. Tanjiro lied on the ground, struggling to stand. Right as Kikotei was about to grab hold of Tanjiro, Giyuu came crashing down on him, fiercely biting down on his neck and shoulder, ripping that area clean of skin. Afterwards he clung tightly to the demon, trying to tear at his neck and spine, unable to decapitate him. Kikotei fell to the ground and was aggressively trying to get his enemy off of him.

Giyuu never lost his grip until he decided he was done. He launched himself off the other demon and quickly ran over to his muzzle, tying it back on to avoid the ability to attack Tanjiro as he did the sun demon. Quickly before Kikotei could finish healing, Giyuu ran over to the burgundy-haired boy, rolling him onto his back to check his wound. All Giyuu had time to do was use the ripped area of the boy's pants to wrap around his upper thigh to stop or slow the bleeding. A millisecond later Kikotei jumped back, preparing an attack.

"**Blood demon art.** ***Scorching dragon breath!***" A tidal wave of flames charged towards the two boys like a water stallion. Giyuu quickly rushed forward, the power of something similar to blood demon art filling his veins. *Water breathing? Blood demon art? Which is it?!* Giyuu wondered to himself. He decided on the one that first came to mind when he named the attack. ***Blood demon art, Raging Tidal Wave!*** The water pillar was able to slightly speak out the words but not completely. Regardless, the attack was unleashed, a powerful wave nearly as big as the "wave" of fire. The attacks clashed, cancelling each other out. Normally water would win, but areas of this fire were hot enough to evaporate the water before

contact.

"G-Giyuu-san," Tanjiro murmured in surprise. Panting, Giyuu didn't take his eyes off his target. Unlike at the house, the demon didn't disappear with the flames. Instead, he was standing right where he had been before, a spark of joy and excitement in his eyes. Predicting his opponents movement, Giyuu dashed over to Tanjiro, getting his back cut open by the sun demon. "GIYUU!!" Tanjiro frantically tried sitting up but the water pillar didn't allow him to.

"Damn, I was hoping I could make *this one* my pawn too," the sun demon growled. "You know, *Giyuu,* what you used just now wasn't blood demon arts." He stared down at the injured demon, watching as regeneration slowly healed his back. "What you have there is the elemental demon arts as I like to call it. Its a slightly stronger form of the blood demon arts, and focuses on one element per user. However, until *you,* none of my pawns have been able to master or even obtain such powers.

"You mean there are *other*s," Tanjiro asked angrily. Giyuu raised his head, growling again.

"Yes, yes! Plenty!" Kikotei cheered. "But none have reached my expectations, so they're either dead or free from my control," he continued, a fake smile on his face. Rage filled Tanjiro's face.

"You bastard!" He yelled at the demon. Giyuu jumped a tad, surprised. It only took a small moment for Giyuu to recover and focus his attention back onto the sun demon. Growling again, the water pillar began crawling forward, still on Tanjiro.

"Hm? You're among the last people I'd expect to call names." Kikotei looked back at Giyuu then up at the clouds that were starting to part, revealing the sun. "Times up," he murmured, grinning at the water pillar. Tomioka launched himself at Kikotei, slashing and kicking but missing almost every time since Kikotei had actually begun dodging more. "**Blood demon art. *Devil's swords!***" With a slashing motion, the demon cut through Giyuu with long, sharp, extended red claws shaped as blades. With the direction and angle this tore through Giyuu's chest, a tiny bit of his neck, stomach, and slightly below his stomach. The demon tumbled to the ground,

rolling multiple times before stopping. Regeneration took its time, leaving Giyuu in severe pain, especially in the lower areas of his body.

"GIYUU-SAN!!" Tanjiro rolled and frantically tried standing. "GIYUU!! Get in the shade!!!" The demon slayer managed to get to his feet, limping towards his fallen ally. "Giyuu please get up!" The burgundy-haired boy tried picking his acquaintance up but failed, still unable to hold weight on his injured leg. Kikotei slowly walked towards the two, unaffected by the sunlight warming his back. At Giyuu's side, Tanjiro was leaning down, untying the muzzle. "Giyuu-san you have to get up, please," Tanjiro whispered as he let the muzzle drop. Giyuu remained motionless as he tried waiting for the wounds to heal. Opening his now pale blue eyes he gazed at the demon slayer.

"Tanjiro I...." the slayer's eyes widened, surprised when Tomioka spoke. He didn't even notice Kikotei almost directly behind him. Giyuu attempted to speak again. "I... I'm-..." He gazed at Tanjiro silently a moment longer before noticing the sun demon. "I'm sorry...." His eyes filled with anger again at the sight of the demon. The Hashira swiftly sat up and pulled Tanjiro down as their enemy slashed down at them. Sunlight began to touch Tomioka, the pillar beginning to burn. He growled in pain and backed away quickly. Tanjiro stood up and swung his blade at his opponent.

"Dammit, die already!" Tanjiro snapped at the sun demon, trying not to think about what Giyuu just said to him. The water pillar had disappeared, hidden somewhere in the shadows now. Tanjiro fell again from the pain that shot up into his leg when he tried to stand on it.

"Looks like your little friend ran off," Kikotei said mockingly, ignoring the boy's comment.

"Free him of his curse or I'll kill you for your blood!" Tanjiro had stood again, putting the majority of his weight on his better foot.

"You can try," the demon said with a grin. "His the first of my pawns t-"

"HE'S NOT YOUR PAWN," Tanjiro yelled, putting himself into a fighting stance. "Water breathing. Ninth form. *Splashing Water Flow, Turbulent!*" His voice went from a murmur to a shout, the boy afterwards launching the attack and striking the target. The attack did a load of damage that was immediately healed. *Dammit!* The burgundy-haired boy landed lightly on his foot, placing the other down softly. Kikotei started launching random punch, scratch, and kicking attacks. Tanjiro dodged and blocked what he could but took most hits. Panting, he backed away slowly.

"Well then, game over, Tanjiro Kamado. I'm sorry it had to end like this. **Blood demon art. *Blazing hell rods!!***" The sharp, thick, blazing red shards from the first battle formed, all aimed towards Tanjiro. *This is the end now isn't it?* Tanjiro thought as he collapsed to the ground, unable to move anymore. *I can't win, not it this state... This demon hasn't even shown any weak points. Dammit!* Tanjiro looked up weakly as the shards began moving towards him. *I'm so sorry, Giyuu...*

The battlefield lit up with bright blue light as Tanjiro shut his eyes. The last thing he heard was an attack being called out, right before he fainted from blood loss.

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"Water breathing! Eleventh form! *DEAD CALM!"*

The shards of Blazing Hell Rods shattered and disappeared as they were cut up buy the attack. In the center of the attack was Giyuu Tomioka, back from wherever he had been, standing in the shade of a tree, sword in hand. He had fetched his blade from the mountain he had left it on and come back to save Tanjiro. The demon water pillar searched back into his memory for more attacks, the next one coming to mind in an instant. With Kikotei still processing what had happened he launched his next attack.

"Water breathing. Tenth form. *Constant Flux!"* The attack perfectly landed on the sun demon. *Shit! My minutes are almost up! I need to leave!!!* Kikotei thought frantically as the attack bashed into him.

The sun demon turned and started running towards the shade, the

sun slowly beginning to burn him.
"You're not going *anywhere!*" A new voice snapped. "Mist breathing. Second form: *Eight-Layered Mist*," the person said in a quiet yet audible voice. The attacks, one after the other, cut into the sun demon. Kikotei stumbled and fell to the ground, bleeding and burning. "Tomioka-san, get Tanjiro out of here!" Muichiro, the attacker, called to the water Hashira. Tomioka nodded, running out into the sun, grabbing Tanjiro, then retreating to the shade before he could disappear completely. The parts of him that did have time to burn regenerated once he got into the shade. As Muichiro passed by the box he launched it to Giyuu. "Use this as shade," he ordered before turning and continuing his way to the sun demon.

I have to get there before he's completely gone, Muichiro thought to himself. He wanted to get the demon's blood for Tanjiro. On the other side of the battlefield, Giyuu ran off with Tanjiro, following the shaded path and keeping the box facing the sun. *How'd this happened?! I cut off the bleeding so he should be fine,* Giyuu thought frantically to himself. *Don't die on me, Tanjiro. Please. I can't lose another one...*

Tanjiro remained motionless in Tomioka's arms, face becoming paler. Meanwhile at the battlefield Muichiro had reached the sun demon. Kikotei quickly slashed at Muichiro, trying to attack him. The mist pillar leaped back, landing a small distance away. "Mist Breathing. First form; *Low Clouds, Distant Haze*." The attack struck Kikotei's neck but didn't decapitate him. He was almost completely gone now, but wouldn't let Muichiro get close enough for blood. The demon slayer Hashira threw his sword. It landed in the demons neck and pinned him down. As the sun demon's hands crumbled, Muichiro stepped forward, jabbing a needle into what remained of his shoulders. The shoulder crumbled before the needle could fill, but Muichiro did manage to get a quarter of it filled.

"Damn, I've been defeated," the sun demon said. "Too bad, I'll see you again soon, Mist pillar Muichiro Tokito." Muichiro quickly stepped back, startled that the demon knew his name. He watched anxiously as the head crumbled to dust in the sunlight. With a quick sigh, Muichiro sheathed his sword and put the needle in a pocket. He turned around, looking at the empty area Giyuu once stood in

with Tanjiro. Then he gazed at the blood soaked dirt where Tanjiro had been lying. The mist pillar quickly looked away after another moment and started running back down the mountain, grabbing the sword Tanjiro had dropped as he passed. At this moment Giyuu had almost made it to the place where all the Hashira sheltered. He then quickly turned direction to make his way to Lady Tamayo's house. All he could do was hope the mist pillar made it out alive; he had no time to go back and check. With a small growl, Giyuu thought of how Tanjiro would react had the pillar gotten hurt. He assumed Tanjiro was already going to be mad at the Mist Hashira for even coming.

Shacking his head, Giyuu released the thought, turning his attention back to his dying friend. Finally he was able to reach the house, struggling to knock without letting go of Tanjiro. The demon slayer was completely motionless aside from his chest occasionally rising as he took shallow breathes. Yushiro appeared at the door what felt like an eternity later, Giyuu rushing past him into the main room. Panting, he fell to his knees and gently lied Tanjiro down.

"When did I say you coul-" Yushiro cut himself off when he noticed Tanjiro's condition. "Lady Tamayo! We have guests," he called out. A moment later, Tamayo appeared from around a corner, rushing over when she saw the burgundy-haired boy. *Shouldn't the stomach wound have been wors*e, Yushiro questioned. Tamayo examined the slayer's body, looking for all wounds.

"He's lost a lot of blood, and might have muscle damage in his leg," Tamayo murmured just loud enough for Giyuu to hear. "He would've been able to hold out longer had he not gained more wounds," she added, pointing out the other less gruesome wounds Tanjiro had gained from the sun demon. "What about you? Do you have any wounds?" Giyuu shook his head. If he were able to talk completely, he'd tell her that his regeneration was finally working and that she should just focus on Tanjiro. Tamayo nodded, turning her focus back to Tanjiro. She was just about to bring out things to help him when Muichiro burst through the door.

"Where's Tanjiro?! Is he alright," he asked frantically. Yushiro quickly ran up to the Hashira, almost attacking until he realized whom it was.

"Yushiro calm down please. and Muichiro, dear, he's over here."

"Sorry, Lady Tamayo!" Yushiro said, immediately returning to the lady demon's side.

"Sorry Tamayo-san," Muichiro said as he walked over. Unlike his usual state, Muichiro seemed to be worried, stressed and sad, actually showing more emotions instead of being seemingly emotionless.

"Can you do me a favor, Muichiro?" Tamayo calmly got out supplies she would need to help Tanjiro.

"Of course, what do you need?"

"Go fetch Tanjiro's friends, I believe they might want to see him."

The mist pillar nodded, turning back to the door and running out. He ran until he reached the butterfly mansion, where the boys were still staying. He was let in when Shinobu saw him, though he ignored her questions and headed straight to the room. It only took Tanjiro's name to get the boys to come with Muichiro. Relieved about that, he immediately took off back towards Tamayo's house, Inosuke and Zenitsu following. They quickly arrived at the multi story house, Yushiro letting them in. Before the boys were allowed to see their friend, a tiny bit was explained to them. After the two were shown into the main room, Zenitsu's face paled, his eyes filling with worry, dread, and tears. Inosuke's expression was hidden under his Hog mask. Tanjiro still lied in the center of the room, in horrible condition. At once Zenitsu and Inosuke carried the same dread filled thought...

Tanjiro's dying?!

Huwo everyone! I'm sorry I took like four months to get this published T-T But here it is now! I hope you all enjoyed this long awaited chapter, otherwise I'm sorry for disappointing you TwT,,, About the ending, I know it makes no sense for him to be at the brink of death with a leg injury yet be just fine after becoming a

donut, and I'm really sorry about that ;-; I guess when I first started this I didn't want Tanjiro to die in like the second chapter yet at the same time I wanted drama??? But now the logic is he lost way to much blood and still pushed himself and gained more wounds along the way so there ya go :D

Anywho, thank you all so much for sticking around and reading! I'm not sure if I'll discontinue this from lack of motivation or not... But if I continue it then within the next few chapters depending how the story progresses I'll have a separate smut chapter that will still be cannon in the story just a skipable chapter for anyone who'd prefer no smut c: Thanks again for reading and tysm for all the votes, I really appreciate the support!! Byeeee

VIII

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*Tanjiro remembered when he had first met Giy*u. The two had been fighting: Tanjiro to defend his sister, and Giyu to kill her. At that time, Tanjiro failed to notice any of the things he would later come to adore about the Hashira. It wasn't his fault, of course. The guy was trying to murder his sister.

Then, over two years later, the opposite. Giyu had broken demon slayer code and protected Nezuko when Shinobu had attempted to kill her. It was around this time that Tanjiro began to truly catch feelings for the Hashira.
He didn't realize at first. He just figured what he was experiencing was gratitude and admiration. Then he grew closer to Tomioka. And closer. And closer. But never quite close enough.

Now, fast forward to years later, he had yet to act on these feelings, and was on the brink of death. At this moment, he just wanted to wake up and continue what little he had started with his love. To make sure Giyu knew it wasn't just some silly confession, that Tanjiro really did love him. But rather, he lay bed-bound and unconscious in Lady Tamayo's house, bleeding out from the leg previously torn open by Oni Kikotei.

Zenitsu and Inosuke stood motionless for a moment before Zenitsu stumbled forward.

"T-Tanjiro," he stammered, stumbling to his knees beside the injured demon slayer. Giyu paced around restlessly, staring down with impatience and worry. Snapping out of his state of shock, Inosuke stepped forward.

"What the hell happened to Gonparchiro?! Who did this?! I'm gonna kill them!!" he shouted, staring expectantly at Giyu for answers.

Giyu growled and Muichiro stepped forward, setting Tanjiro's sword against the wall.

"He's already dead. The demon who hurt Tanjiro." Inosuke turned to him.

"What?! How?! Did you slaughter it viciously?!" The pillar looked to the ground, wishing he had. Then, he raised his gaze.

"The sun killed him. But that's not important right now." Muichiro turned to Tamayo. "Tamayo-san, will he make it?" Tamayo nodded as she began pulling medicine from cabinets.

"Fortunately, yes. However," she paused, staring sorrowfully at Tanjiro's injured leg. "He may not be able to use that leg for some time, if ever, depending on how much damage his nerves and muscles took. Zenitsu sighed in relief knowing Tanjiro would at least live. Though, he couldn't wrap his mind around how his friend managed to so easily survive a stab to the stomach, yet fell unconscious to a torn leg. "He's lost a lot of blood," Tamayo continued, returning to Tanjiro's side. "It may take him a bit to regain consciousness. For now, I'll stop the bleeding and clear up the wound. Once it's clean I'll be able to give you all further updates on his condition. Yushiro, could you fetch him some water, please?" Yushiro quickly nodded.

"Of course, Lady Tamayo!" The demon scurried around the others and to the house's kitchen area. Inosuke grumbled angrily.

"I want to shred that filthy sun creature! Next time-"

"Inosuke, he's dead, didn't you hear Muichiro-san..?" Zenitsu interrupted. Inosuke huffed and continued his threats against the deceased demon, ignoring Zenitsu's comment. Giyu growled and sighed, then walked to Tanjiro's side. Tamayo glanced over at him as he stared guilty at the injured demon slayer. The sight reminded her of when Nezuko was demon. The bond they shared, the way they worried for each other and cared so dearly about each other. Even the way they blamed themselves whenever the other was injured. But she could tell there was one difference. Nezuko and Tanjiro were siblings. Their love for each other was purely platonic

and filled with family bond. However, the way Tomioka cared for Tanjiro, she could tell was no way that. With a gentle smile, she continued on Tanjiro's wound.

"He'll be alright. I'll promise you that, Tomioka. Don't blame yourself for this. He wouldn't want that, would he?" Giyu turned his head to Tamayo in slight surprise. He then looked down and nodded. Staring at the boy once more, he quietly sighed, reaching his hand out and caressing Tanjiro's head. He could hear the boy's breathing become less shallow, and although still pained, more constant. A tad relieved by this, Giyu rested his head beside Tanjiro on the bed. A couple moments later, Yushiro returned with a cup of water, handing it to Tamayo.

Still standing in the doorway, Muichiro silently watched the water pillar as he offered to help get Tanjiro to drink the water. As he stared at Giyu gently helping the boy to drink, he could feel an emotion nagging at him, but quickly chose to ignore it. Turning away, he spoke softly to Tamayo without looking that way.

"I'll be going now. Please update me on his condition when you can." With this, he gazed at the floor for just a moment then stealthily ran off, forgetting about the demon blood stored in his pocket. Zenitsu watched him go, curious and concerned. But his attention was quickly turned back to the demons when Tamayo spoke.

"You to should go as well. Get some rest. You can return in the morning to check on Tanjiro if you wish. Bring Nezuko, if you can. I believe she should know about her brother's condition, as well."

"O-oh, okay.." He turned to Tanjiro. "Get well, Tanjiro. Don't die on us." After giving his sleeping friend a worried gaze, Zenitsu bowed lightly to Tamayo. "Please take care of him." Yushiro growled.

"Lady Tamayo is more than capable of taking perfect care of Tanjiro," he snapped. Zenitsu flinched and yelped slightly.

"I-I didn't mean that she couldn't!!"

"Yushiro." The demon immediately straightened up.

"Sorry, my lady!" Inosuke finally stopped his ramblings about killing Kikotei when Zenitsu grabbed his arm and started dragging him out of the house.

"Where are we going?! What about Kapajiro?! Are we going to kill the twig-demon?!" Zenitsu sighed.

"Do you listen to anything anyone says.... We're going back to the mansion, Tamayo-san and Yushiro-san are going to look after Tanjiro again, we can come back tomorrow. And Kikotei is already dead!" When Inosuke started shouting again, Zenitsu decided just to ignore it and continued dragging him as the sun began to set.

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By the time the moon rose in the sky, Tamayo was finally done patching up Tanjiro's smaller wounds, and was nearly done cleaning the largest one. Giyu, who was resting his head on the boy's chest, quickly rose when he heard a groan from Tanjiro, who had also moved just slightly from his resting position.
'Tanjiro?! He's waking up!'

"Mn!!" Giyu said to Tamayo and Yushiro to get their attention. The two other demons brought their attention to Tanjiro's movements. Slowly, the demon slayer opened his eyes, moving his arms as if to try sitting up.

"Tanjiro! Don't move, you're leg is still badly injured!" Right as he heard that, Tanjiro had already tried pulling himself up, only for a sharp pain to spike from his leg. He flinched and settled back to his previous position.

"A-ahhh.." Partially squinting, the burgundy-haired boy looked down at his leg, then up to process where he was. "..Tamayo-san..? Yushiro-san..." He turned his head to see Giyu closely inspecting him with concern. Startled by his closeness, Tanjiro's head skitted back a bit. "T-Tomioka-san!"

"Mnph..?" Remembering what previously happened, Tanjiro immediately jumped up as much as he could without moving his leg.

"Are you alright?! What happened?? I-is he dead..? Are you hurt?" Tamayo smiled and Yushiro stood back with a silent glare for no reason. Giyu nodded to Tanjiro's questions, then reached and touched the boy's cheek. Tanjiro's face lit up with joy and relief, then he quickly hugged the pillar.
"I'm so glad you're ok, Giyu-san!" Giyu gently returned the gesture before asking Tanjiro the same first question with some mumbles.

"Are you feeling ok, Tanjiro?" Tamayo asked. "I tried to num your leg for now, I hope that's alright." Tanjiro turned his attention to the her.

"Ah, thank you Tamayo-san. It only hurts when I move it like I did earlier." He chuckled sheepishly, then smiled warmly. "I'm just glad Tomioka-san got out ok." The boy turned his head back to Giyu and placed a hand on the demon's head, patting him as he used to with his sister. Grumbling to himself, Tomioka crept away. *'You should really start concerning more over yourself,'* the Hashira thought to himself. Tanjiro stared at him for a moment with a hint of concern and confusion but then turned to the small window on the other side of the room. The curtains were opened to reveal a sparkling night sky, which instantly reminded Tanjiro of when he had been stargazing with Tomioka that night at the butterfly mansion. His smile returned. "Tomioka-san, we should go stargazing again sometime." Giyu glanced at him, then to the window. He didn't respond this time. Breaking the silence, Yushiro spoke.

"Tanjiro, you should sleep. I know you've just woke up, but with that injury it would be best to at least sleep until morning. Plus, you'll be having visitors then." Tanjiro rose his head to Yushiro, surprised by the demon's apparent concern. Tamayo smiled to Yushiro then returned her gaze to the demon slayer.

"Yes, Yushiro's right. But first, you should eat a bit. You must be hungry, considering you were unconscious for so long and lost a lot of blood. Yushiro, could you prepare the kitchen please? I'll be there in a moment to prepare Tanjiro's food."

"Y-yes Lady Tamayo!!" Yushiro replied, flustered from the previous smile of appreciation he was given from her. *'Lady Tamayo's smile is so beautiful!'* he thought to himself as he swiftly left the room.

"Tomioka?" Giyu quickly turned to Tamayo. "What about you? Would you like anything?" Giyu shook his head softly. "Then I'll return shortly with your food, Tanjiro."

"Thank you so much, Tamayo-san!" Tanjiro watched as she exited the room. Once she was gone, his attention was refocused onto Giyu. "...Giyu-san, are you alright? Is something wrong?"

"...hmph."

"...Giyu-sannn.. Did I do something? I-I'm sorry I couldn't finish the fight with you.. I-"

"Hrngh!! Grrn..," Giyu complained, trying to explain himself around the muzzle. Giving up and not feeling the energy to struggle, he inched back over to the bed and rested his head by Tanjiro's leg. With an upset huff, he stared at the injury on the other leg. Tanjiro stared down sadly and ran his hand over Tomioka's head.

"Sorry, Tomioka-san... I know I keep getting hurt, and it's not fair to you.. Just don't blame yourself, alright? And next time, I'll make sure we both come out without injury. Or at least, not too badly hurt..." He laughed lightly. Giyu glanced up at him, but didn't respond. *'That's practically impossible. I just wish it were me landing on the deathbed instead of you.'* The Hashira sighed, closing his eyes as Tanjiro continued to pat him. A couple minutes passed, the two just sitting there, before Yushiro and Tamayo re-entered the room with food and water. Tanjiro looked up and cautiously took the plate of food as Tamayo handed it to him.

"Thank you, Tamayo-san." The boy dipped his head and slowly began to eat, complementing the food's taste seconds later. The room was mostly silent aside from the occasional mention of something random from Tanjiro. Tamayo would reply, then it'd go silent again. Giyu simply sat and watched as Tanjiro finished his meal. After taking a few more drinks of his water, the boy thanked Tamayo once more and lied back down to rest. Yushiro took the dishes so the lady demon wouldn't have to, then soon returned to her side.

"Lady Tamayo, we should go so he can rest," Yushiro suggested.

Tamayo nodded in agreement and walked to the doorway before turning to Giyu.

"What about you, Tomioka? You haven't gotten much sleep since turning into a demon, it seems, so you should rest as well. I could prepare you a room?" Giyu turned around, hesitating for a couple moments before nodding and standing, following the other two demons out of Tanjiro's room. It was true he hadn't slept much, although he did try to sleep every night when Tanjiro did. But the small amounts of sleep he got didn't help much with his growing hunger and draining energy. Especially after the two battles he had with Kikotei. He sighed, then yawned.

The Hashira figured he would have to sleep soon, especially if he wanted to avoid eating humans, but he had a strong feeling it may upset Tanjiro if he did. Something told him that if he were asleep too long, it would worry the boy. He didn't know where that prediction came from, but with the assumption it was true, he refused to let himself sleep longer than the average human would. Shaking his head, he cleared the thought. Thinking about it would just make him more exhausted.

Up ahead, Yushiro opened the door to a different room, allowing Tamayo to enter and show it to Tomioka. Looking inside, there was a soft bed as well as a couple of basic room things like a stand and small dresser. Giyu mumbled in thanks, slightly dipping his head to her before entering and collapsing onto the bed.

"Be sure to get some rest, Tomioka. If you need anything, Yushiro and I will be in our separate rooms."

"Mnm." With a small smile, Tamayo closed the room's door and left Giyu to himself. Sighing, Tomioka turned onto his back, staring at the ceiling. Glancing at his hands, then his claws, he growled, reflecting on the last two battles he fought against the sun demon. '*Why am I so weak? I can't even defeat a single demon like this, yet as a human-..*' He stopped. He couldn't comment much on being human, because he didn't even remember when he was. Another irritating factor. On the very day he became demon, he couldn't remember a single thing up until the point of the pain brought to him by claws raking his side. With a frustrated "mrph", Giyu turned and glared at

the wall. *'I'm weak, remember nothing, can hardly talk, and can't even protect the one I love, just like before!'* ?!
....'Before? What am I even talking about?' Giyu stared at his hand once more, and for just a second, it looked to be stained with blood, holding a fabric. But this sight quickly faded. Confused, Giyu sat up and shook his head. He growled again. '*And now I'm hallucinating. Great. I should really get some sleep...'* The demon exhaled deeply then lied back down, curling up on the center of the bed. Per closing his eyes, he quickly began to fall asleep. And soon, he drifted into a dream just like the ones he'd started months ago....

***

Some hours earlier

Muichiro ran swiftly from the house, forgetting all about the demon blood in his pocket. This was a mistake he would very soon come to regret. But his mind was racing with other thoughts which distracted him from that. Thoughts about Tanjiro, and the newly demonized Hashira glued to his side.

Forget. That's what you're best at, anyway. Just forget.

Muichiro continued his run until he made it to an area near the Butterfly Mansion, where some of the Hashiras were waiting to receive news about the mission Tanjiro had taken. '*Block them out, at the very least until you get home.'* Clearing his head, Mui sighed softly before entering the clearing. Immediately, he was struck by the gaze of Shinobu, Rengoku, and Mitsuri.

"Ah, you're here!" Rengoku greeted him enthusiastically, although there was a slight edge to his tone.

"So, how'd it go?" Shinobu asked.

"Tanjiro is injured, this time on his leg. Tamayo-san is caring for him at the moment, she says he should recover well," Muichiro reported in reply. "As for the demon, he's dead."

"Oh? Are you referring to Tomioka or the sun demon?" Shinobu smiled slightly and tilted her head. Mitsuri fidgetted in concern.

"The sun demon. Tomioka-san is fine and with Tanjiro at Tamayo-san's place." '*Thank goodness,*' Mitsuri thought to herself.

"Ah, I see~."

"That's wonderful news," Rengoku beamed. "Thank you for informing us, Tokito-kun!" Muichiro nodded to the other pillars, then turned and swiftly dashed off again. As he left, his mind was flooded again. *'Shut it out. Just ignore it!'* But he couldn't.

For the past few months, Tomioka and Tanjiro had been growing closer and closer, and for some reason he couldn't comprehend, Muichiro didn't like it. He was... What did they call it? Jealous? No, he couldn't be. He refused to believe he was. And it only got worse after Tomioka became a demon and Tanjiro started to spend every living second with the pillar. Muichiro hated himself for feeling that way, after all it wasn't like they could ever be anything anyway. Tanjiro was just a friend, and it would always be that way. It was supposed to be that way.

Muichiro tried to shake his thoughts away, repeating that to himself constantly. Finally, he made it home. Upon entering his house, he went to his room and crashed on his bed. '*Just think about something else, it's not that hard. Tanjiro isn't for you.*' The pillar rolled over a couple of times, trying to think of something else he could keep his mind on. While rolling onto his other side, he felt a crack at his side and a small poke of something sharp. Sitting up quickly, he looked at his side to see his pocket newly covered in blood. Eyes widening, he realized what happened.

The glass broke. Quickly, he reached his hand into the pocket, pulling out the syringe that was previously holding Kikotei's blood. The clear area had broken, though Muichiro didn't understand how. He wasn't nearly heavy enough to crush it. Reaching back into his pocket, he carefully pulled out the glass shards. He was sure not to cut himself, because despite Kikotei being dead he didn't want to risk mixing demon blood with his own.

Placing the shards beside him, Muichiro looked into his pocket. The blood was everywhere. It had very quickly soaked into his haori, leaving only a drop in the broken syringe. He felt slight panic edge

into him. *'No, no, no! How'd this happen?! What do I do??'*

Trying to calm himself, Muichiro thought. *'I can bring this to Tamayo-sama. I don't think it'll be enough, but I may as well see. Ugh, why'd I let this happened?!'* Glaring at the floor for a moment, Mui turned to the broken syringe. He picked it up then turned to a window. It was dark outside. *'I should wait until morning. At least then, hopefully, sleep will clear my mind.'* The demon slayer left his bed, finding a jar to put the drop of blood in so it didn't try up. Afterwards, he took a quick bath to clean himself and his haori, then lied down to rest. As he did, he couldn't help but think what would happen if the drop of blood wasn't enough. After all, it was just a drop. And Kikotei, being dead, wouldn't be providing any more.

Would Tanjiro be mad? He didn't want to make Tanjiro angry... And if Giyu remained demon, then those two would just continue to spend every living second with each other. Muichiro slapped himself. *'That isn't what you should be worried about! If Tomioka-san remains a demon, we could risk him attacking or eating a human! That's why we need to turn him into a human. Not because of some stupid feelings.'* Staring at the wall opposite of him, he felt a hint of guilt.

'You're being selfish. That's not like you. Just think about curing Tomioka. As a demon slayer and Hashira, its my duty to protect humans from demons, and as long as Tomioka doesn't taste human blood, then in this case it means returning him to humanity.' His gaze shifted to a crooked mirror on the wall. He stared sternly at his reflection.

So, ignore these meaningless feelings, and do your job!

***

The sun was slow to rise, and therefore slow to wake the sleeping demon slayers in the Butterfly Mansion. But when they eventually did get up, Zenitsu was almost immediately trampled by Inosuke.

"Gettup Kenritsu! Its time to visit Gonpachiro!" The boar head stomped aggressively on the floor beside Zenitsu's head. Annoyed, the boy cast a glare at Inosuke.

"Do you have to shout *every* morning?! It's annoying!" he complained, sitting up. Inosuke stiffened slightly.

"I'm not annoying!"

"You kind of are," Zenitsu grumbled bluntly before he stood. "Lets go get Nezuko now." Inosuke watched him go for a few moments before following.

"I'm not annoying," he shouted back. Zenitsu ignored as he complained about the insult. Stopping at the door to the girls' room, Zenitsu knocked.

"Nezuko-chaaannn~~," he called, swaying at the door. Inosuke shouted more angrily in the background. After a couple seconds, Nezuko opened the door. She smiled.

"Good morning, Zenitsu-san!" Zenitsu's face flushed lightly at the sight of his former crush.

"Good morning~," he replied sweetly. "I have something to ask you." Nezuko's head tilted slightly.

"What is it?"

"We're going to see Gonpachiro!!" Inosuke interrupted. "Come with us! The lady demon said you should!" Zenitsu glared at him.

"Stop shouting! And you're supposed to ask, not demand!!" he yelled back to Inosuke. Nezuko's gaze became concerned.

"I'll come with you. Is Tanjiro hurt?" she asked with worry. Zenitsu quickly turned back to her.

"Sorry about him, Nezuko-chan! Yes, Tanjiro got hurt in battle again." He looked at the ground for a moment. "But Tamayo said he'd get better! He's at her place right now, actually.. We should get some food then head that way." Nezuko nodded in agreement, the demon slayer then leading her and Inosuke to get a small meal.

Meanwhile, at his house, Muichiro was preparing himself to visit Tanjiro as well. As he slipped his haori on, he glanced over at the

tiny jar that held the singular drop of demon blood. Ignoring the little remaining guilt that came from breaking the syringe, he carefully slipped the jar into a different pocket and left. Outside, he inhaled the fresh air before setting off, allowing it to clear his mind. *'Please be enough,'* was the last thing Muichiro thought before dashing to Tamayo's house with an empty mind.

Zenitsu, Inosuke, and Nezuko ate quickly before they too set out for Tamayo's place. It would've been a silent walk had Inosuke not been challenging Zenitsu the entire way there, still upset about being insulted, despite usually not caring. The thunder breather tried to get him to shut up, but he wouldn't listen. After what felt like an eternity to Zenitsu, they finally reached Tamayo's place. Muichiro had just gotten to the door when the trio gained sight of the house.

"Ah, Tokito-san!" Zenitsu waved slightly so the pillar would notice them. Muichiro turned around and decided to wait for them. Once the trio was caught up in distance, Mui knocked on the door. Unlike the usual angry Yushiro, Giyu answered. Mui stepped back and allowed Zenitsu to be the greeter. "G-good morning, Tomioka-san... May we come in," Zenitsu asked nervously.

"Mnph." Giyu walked back, allowing the four to enter.

"Hello Tomioka-san!" Nezuko smiled as she entered, greeting the demon kindly. She was familiar with the situation he was in, and that mixed with his willingness to sacrifice his life for her (and Tanjiro) when she was a demon made her fond of him. Giyu nodded his head in greeting, Nezuko reaching up to softly pat him in the sisterly gesture she had used as a demon.

Once all four were in, Giyu led them to the room Tanjiro was in. Inside, Tamayo was serving him breakfast while Yushiro set medicine on the stand beside his bed. Giyu tapped on the wall for their attention.
"Thank you, Yushiro," Tamayo said softly as Yushiro finished placing Tanjiro's medicine. Her gaze moved to Giyu and the others. "Welcome, I'm glad you all came," she said with a smile. "Come in."

"Onii-san!" Nezuko ran to her brother's bedside. Tanjiro's smiled widened greatly.

"Nezuko!!" The two embraced each other warmly, Nezuko snuggling up to her brother's chest. She looked up at him.

"Are you ok?? I heard you got hurt again!" Tanjiro chuckled lightly then smiled reassuringly.

"I'm ok, Nezuko, just hurt my leg a bit." He motioned to his wrapped right leg, Nezuko twisting her head to look back at it. Her eyes widened a bit.

"A bit?! Onii-san it looks bad! What happened," she asked, moving cautiously to inspect his leg. Tanjiro flinched as she gently rested her hand on the bandaged wound.

"I-I fought with the demon who turned Giyu again. But it's nothing too bad, Tamayo-san says it should heal well as long as I rest." Nezuko pouted.

"You should be more careful, you know demons that can turn others are more dangerous," she complained with a tone of concern for her brother. Zenitsu and Inosuke walked up to the two.

"I know.. Sorry, Nezuko," Tanjiro replied, patting his sister out of old habit. He moved his gaze to his friends, noticing they had approached. "Zenitsu! Inosuke!"

"You're awake," Zenitsu said happily. "I'm glad you're ok! Why'd you have to go off on your own and leave me here with Inosuke," he complained. Tanjiro laughed.

"Gonpachiro!! Zenitsu keeps saying I'm annoying, and he won't fight me!!" Inosuke yelled. "How's your leg?!"

"Sorry, Zenitsu," the burgundy-haired boy chuckled lightly. "Inosuke, you shouldn't be fighting him anyways, I thought we already established that." Tanjiro was smiling, so Inosuke wasn't sure whether or not to take him seriously. "Zenitsu, I thought you li-"

"SHHHZTZSH!" Zenitsu speedily slapped his hands over Tanjiro's mouth. "Tanjiro!!! If you're about to say what I think you're about to say, I thought you promised not to!!!!" he yelled, Inosuke staring in

confusion.

"Mpph-," Tanjiro tried speaking around his friend's hands. Zenitsu hesitantly allowed him to grab his wrists and lower them. "Ah, sorry, sorry, I forgot," Tanjiro said with an apologetic chuckle. Inosuke huffed.

"What?! What were you going to say?!"

"Sorry, Inosuke, it's Zenitsu's secret to tell," he replied kindly. Inosuke frustratedly started challenging and yelling at Zenitsu to get the secret out. Nezuko laughed softly. The Kamados watched their friends bicker for a couple moments before Yushiro became annoyed and escorted them out of the room. Sighing happily, Tanjiro turned back to his sister.
"How've you been, Nezuko? Has Kanao and Aoi been nice?" Nezuko nodded.

"Mhm. They're very kind, and it's nice being around other girls for a change. Though, I do miss having you around," she admitted. Tanjiro's smile became sad. The two hadn't intentionally started distancing. Tanjiro was just caught up in demon slayer duties, and now had to care for a demon Giyu. He didn't allow Nezuko to join him on missions now that she was human. So, for the most part, she just spent her time with Aoi, and whenever she was there, Kanao. The siblings missed each other, but Tanjiro had work to do.

"I miss you too, Nezuko," Tanjiro replied softly. The two hugged again, Nezuko being sure not to move or touch Tanjiro's injured leg. In the doorway, Mui and Giyu watched, Muichiro unsure of when he was allowed to enter the conversation. After the siblings exchanged a few more words, Tanjiro finally noticed the mist Hashira. "Tokito-san!" His smile returned. Nezuko left the bed to stand near Tamayo.

"Good morning, Tanjiro. Did you sleep well?" Tanjiro nodded.

"Yeah, my leg feels better than it did yesterday. What are you doing here?" He tilted his head.

"Oh, um.. Yesterday, I had a bad feeling that something would go

wrong, so I got directions from your crow and came to help..." Tanjiro's eyes widened.

"Tokito-san! I told you not to come, you could've gotten hurt!"

"I'm a Hashira, Tanjiro! I can handle something like that! I should've came with you in the first place, maybe then *you* wouldn't have gotten hurt. You should worry more about yourself, Tanjiro." He walked closer to the demon slayer's bed. Tanjiro frowned.

"Sorry, Mui," he murmured. Muichiro sat beside him on the bed.

"Please be more considerate of yourself, Tanjiro.." Silence filled the room for a few moments, then Muichiro spoke again. "Also..." He reached into his pocket, hesitantly grabbing the small jar. "Before he died, I got some of that demon's blood.." Tanjiro looked up, eyes wide and shining. Muichiro saw this and guilt flooded him again.

"You did? That's great!" The boy looked at Giyu, who was still standing by the door. "Giyu-san, isn't that great? We can cure you now!" Giyu looked up at him and tilted his head. Mui stared at his lap, feeling worse for making Tanjiro happy only to now have to crush that happiness. He hesitated.

"..B-....."

"Hm? What is it, Tokito-san?" Tanjiro's head tilted.

"I... uh.." He pulled the jar out. "I lost most of it...." Tamayo rose her head to look at the Hashira and his drop of demon blood. Tanjiro's happiness faded. He turned to the lady demon.

"T-Tamayo-san, would that be enough to cure Tomioka-san?" Tanjiro knew the question was stupid. But he had to ask. Kikotei was dead based on what Muichiro said, and Giyu was still demon. Which meant that drop of blood was the only hope for Tomioka. Tamayo approached the mist pillar, observing the jar.

"I'm not sure. There's a small chance. If you'd like, I can make the cure based on that chance. If the demon is dead, it's the best chance we have got." Tanjiro nodded his head, his fear masked by his usual hopeful demeanor.

"If there's even a slight chance it'll work, I'd like to try!" Muichiro glanced at the boy. *'How can he even be hopeful? There's no way a singular drop of blood can cure Tomioka-san.'* Staring back at the ground, guilty, Muichiro murmured quietly.

"I'm sorry, Tanjiro." Tanjiro looked at him, then smiled a bit.

"You don't need to apologize. It's not your fault. At least you tried to get the blood, you didn't even need to do that," he replied kindly. Muichiro didn't respond. *'Why are you always so kind? How? It is my fault, I broke the knife and now you may never get to change Tomioka back into a human.'* Exhaling quietly, Muichiro looked up and handed the jar to Tamayo. Taking it carefully, Tamayo slipped it into a pocket on her kimono.

"Thank you for retrieving that, Tokito," the demon said as she did so. Muichiro nodded silently.

"I should be going. I just came to check on Tanjiro and deliver that, and now I have," he said after a bit of silence passed in the room. Slowly, his gaze rose to meet Tanjiro's. "Get better, Tanjiro," he said quietly before getting up from the bed.

"Thank you, Mui, I will," Tanjiro responded, Muichiro looking back to see him smiling widely at the Hashira. Quickly turning his head back around, Muichiro rushed out of the door, Giyu staring at him as he passed.
"Hmph," the demon growled after he was gone.

"Hm? I-is there something wrong, Tomioka-san?" Giyu said nothing, just staring at Tanjiro with narrowed eyes. "Eh..? Did I do something??"

"Mmm..n." Nezuko laughed, walking up to Giyu.

"I think he thinks something about you and Tokito-san," Nezuko said, Giyu shrinking to let her pat him. Tanjiro stared in confusion, tilting his head.

"Huh? What do yo-" Tanjiro cut off as he realized what she meant. "G-giyu-san! Where'd you get that from?! W-we're only friends!" *'Did*

I do something that signified more than that????' Giyu simply continued to stare without response. After a bit of prolonged eye contact, the demon sighed and walked to the bed, resting his head on it like he did the day before. Tanjiro's smile returned and he ran his hand over Tomioka's head. "You know you wouldn't have to worry about anything like that, right?" He continued in a gentle whisper, "I already told you I like you, and I meant that. You're the one I like, Giyu-san." Giyu's eyes brightened, and he held Tanjiro's hand to his cheek, the warmth a comforting touch.

Tamayo and Nezuko, smiling warmly in the background, left the room together to work out a cure and leave the boys to each other. On their way out they passed Yushiro, who was holding Inosuke back from tackling Zenitsu. Per the ladies request, the three boys joined them to assist in what they could.

Meanwhile, Muichiro rushed home once more, and a familiar face formed of ashes spawned in the shade of a mountain's pine tree.

...Approx. 5543 words.....

Hello everyone!! There are a couple things I would like to say regarding this chapter, story plot, etc.. Lets start with there will no longer be author's notes in every chapter lol
I know a lot of people don't like authors notes, so instead of having one in every chapter like I did before, I will only do them in chapters where I need to. Like ones I post after a year of being unalived . Speaking of that, sorry if this chapter is messy and sucks, I need to get back into writing fanfictions :/

Anyways, onto the story stuff. Let's start with ages. Everyone has been aged up to around four years for legal reasons (I'd rather not write a 21 y/o dating a 15 y/o) . Those ages can be seen as follows:
Tanjiro - 19 | Zenitsu - 20 | Nezuko - 18 | Inosuke - 19 | Muichiro - 18 | Kanao - 20 | Genya - 20 | Aoi - 20(?) | Uzui - 27 | Rengoku - 24 | Giyu - 25 | Mitsuri - 23 | Obanai - 25 | Sanemi - 25 | Gyomei - 31 | Shinobu - 22
If I missed someone important tell me and I'll add them here

Next, ships! I've decided on some official ship business that I'll be involving, which includes background ships and stuff regarding the main ship.
So ofc we have GiyuTan , that isn't changing. And per this chapter there is official unrequited MuiTan love.
(Spoilers)The MuiTan thing is going to be a bit of a problem in the next chapter or two, maybe three, but eventually, while the main story will always be on Tanjiro and Giyu, there will be some background stuff and Mui will probably end up getting over Tanjiro and starting a relationship with Genya(s)
A couple other background ships will be Obanai and Mitsuri ofc, InoZen , and mayyyybeee a lil bit of UzuRen because I've recently become obsessed >.<
But of course as mentioned previously GiyuTan will and always will remain the main focus, because that's what y'all came for

ok, now, where this story is going and plot stuff.
I'm actually writing out plot now (unlike when I first made this), and have quite a few things planned. This story should last a while :D Which means if you prefer short stories this probably isn't for you •<•
As I slowly improve on writing, the plot will hopefully become better and more enjoyable, alongside grammar (so many mistakes in previous chapters ;_;)(clam memories...)
I have a mix of both fluff and angst planned, so if that's what you like, please stay and read! (random mention: I had an idea of how to incorporate the mugen train arc into this, then remembered I already did in the beginning ;_; RIP good ideas)
And while I have many ideas of my own, if you have some as well, throw some comments at me :D I want to keep this a story people will enjoy and hopefully remember :)

Finally, upload schedule. I have that planned too now! I can't make any promises, but for now I want to push myself for at least a chapter each month. I know this probably isn't a lot to you all, but if I do more than that right away, that would be a bit stressful for me and chapters would lack in quality. Once I regain the ability to ease my way through fanfiction writing, I'll be able to produce more at once without the quality plummeting.

Alright, that's all I can think to say for now, if you have questions, please ask! Thank you for reading, and don't forget to stalk up on bug spray!

IX (unfinished)

This chapter is unfinished and may not ever be completed, but I wanted to publish it anyway for you guys, since I'm most likely not finishing this fic.

For the rest of that day, Tanjiro ran into many troubling thoughts and unavoidable worry. Any time he laid his eyes on Giyu, he couldn't help but think of what would happen if the cure didn't work. What was he supposed to do if they couldn't find another cure? He couldn't let Giyu stay a demon forever! Giyu wasn't Nezuko, and the boy was scared he wouldn't be able to keep control of the demon for as long as he had his sister. Mostly because, for all he knew, this was a bond that could be broken.

It was noon now, and Tanjiro was picking at a lunch Tamayo had made for him. With worry filling his guts, he didn't have the motivation or stomach to eat much. Yushiro, who was in his room cleaning, noticed his plucking.

"You better eat that, Lady Tamayo made it out of the goodness of her heart," the demon growled. Tanjiro looked up.

"I-I'm not very hungry," the boy responded hesitantly.

"HOW CAN YOU NOT BE HUNGRY FOR LADY TAMAYO'S FOOD?! SHE'S THE BEST COO-" Yushiro stopped himself, mostly for the sake of not attracting negative attention from Tamayo (who was in the other room), but also due to noticing the paleness of Tanjiro's face. Muttering something inaudible to himself, Yushiro walked over to the bed, staring down at the injured demon slayer. Hesitantly, he asked "Are you alright?" Tanjiro nodded and smiled kindly.

"Ye-"

"Don't lie to me," the demon warned. Tanjiro stared down at nothing in particular before replying.

"I'm just worried about Giyu. That's all," he murmured. Yushiro sat down at the edge of the bed.

"That he'll stay a demon?" Tanjiro nodded.

"I'm scared what might happen if we can't cure him." He stayed silent for a moment, deciding on words before he continued. "Giyu-san isn't like Nezuko. I don't know as much about him that I'd like to. And while I like him regardless, I'm scared our bond may not be as strong as I hope, which makes me doubt I can keep control for as long as I did when Nezuko was a demon."

"You're scared that you'll lose control over him, and that he'll end up eating a human," Yushiro summarized. "Do you doubt him, or yourself?" Tanjiro stared at him, startled by the question. He wanted to say himself, but when he thought the question over he wasn't sure. The bed was met with a troubled gaze as the boy debated an answer. After a bit, Yushiro sighed. "I see." He stood from the bed and returned to his previous task. "You're gonna have to put a little more trust in him if you plan on curing him. Same goes with yourself." Tanjiro's gaze landed back on the demon, and he smiled faintly.

"Thank you, Yushiro-san."

"Don't mention it." Yushiro's usual fierce tone returned. "Seriously, don't mention this *ever*." Tanjiro exhaled warily. *'Aand there it is, the usual Yushiro-san'* He allowed his usual smile to return as he slowly began eating. Yushiro was right when he said Tamayo was the best cook; her food was absolutely amazing. So, although his stomach was still in knots, he wouldn't allow himself to waste it.
And with that though, Tanjiro dug into the small meal.

***

Sunlight flooded the mist hashira's estate, highlighting his dark hair in orange hues. The youngling sat at a small desk, books and articles in hand. Each of them appeared to contain one thing or

another about demons, demon blood, medication, etcetera. His eyes observed each word carefully from what was open, then let out an exasperated sigh.

"There's nothing here!" Muichiro complained aloud. He threw his head back and stared at the ceiling miserably. *'What did I even expect? Nezuko was the first demon to return to being human, so for all we know that's the only way to cure one. And I screwed that tactic up.'* Leaning back forward, he stared at the books and articles littering the desk. *'How am I supposed to make this up to Tanjiro?'* Muichiro folded his arms over the pile and rested his head on them. Thoughts of the other boy flooded in almost immediately after the question. *'Agh, not this again..'*

It was only a matter of time before the pillar's feelings for the boy drove him crazy. He already knew he couldn't have Tanjiro, not when he so obviously liked Giyu. But regardless, Muichiro couldn't rid of his own feelings. It was annoying. With a deep sigh, he got up from where he was sitting, walking in the direction of outside. There, he would clear his mind. Or perhaps put current thoughts to use in some way.

Muichiro stepped out into the light of day once more, warm sunlight resting on his pale skin as he entered his estate's small garden. Walking to the area with mini rock waterfalls, he sat on a dry boulder. His misty gaze restlessly darted from rock to pond to plant and back again as he tried to find serenity in it. But even with the soft peacefulness of his garden, Mui couldn't get his love out of his mind. He hated how much it had grown, and how fast it was still growing. Consulting Mitsuri did no good, he had tried that before. That just led to his near confession, which could only ever make things worse.

'*Well, this has proven useless. C'mon brain damage, work with me for once.'* Muichiro sighed in defeat after awhile of trying to find distractions. Usually that was as easy as ever for him. He could simply spot an odd shaped cloud or a plant's shadow and boom, distracted. But not now. Deciding the thoughts were useless to fight, he planned a new tactic. *'Perhaps I just need to think of the negative things? The things about him that annoy me. Or maybe things about me that would annoy him. Maybe that would help.'* The Hashira decided

to focus on this for the next hour and a half, before finally, a potentially useful idea came to mind.

Not a very good one, though. In fact, he disliked that it came to mind, although that didn't stop him from using it.

'What if I just distance from him, just until I can get over myself. Yeah, I'll do that.' He stared at the vast sky for a while longer before sitting up from his position.

'Tomorrow I'll go speak to Tanjiro. Then, this will all be over soon after.'

***

Time skip to the next morning

Giyu, currently resting in boredom against a wall in Tanjiro's temporary room, stirred as he heard the boy's weight shift on the bed. Opening his deep blue eyes, he turned them in Tanjiro's direction. The boy had sat up and moved himself to the bed's edge, his feet rested softly on the wood floor. He smiled at Giyu.

"Giyu-san, do you think you could go get Tamayo-sama for me?" Giyu's head titled curiously, but he nodded without hesitation and left. Traveling until he spotted the lady demon, the pillar softly tapped her shoulder. Tamayo turned to him with her usual soft gaze.

"Hello Tomioka. Is there something you need?"

"Mm-mm," he responded, pointing in the direction of Tanjiro's room. Lady Tamayo understood and led the way back to the shaded room. Tanjiro greeted his caretaker with a grin. The demon's gaze turned curious when she saw his position.

"Was there something you needed, Tanjiro?" The boy looked down at his injured leg as if debating. Then, a determined look crossed his face.

"Tamayo-san, do you think it would be safe to walk with this?" He asked rather stupidly.

"Not particularly..." The demon slayer quickly realized the idiocy in the way he worded the question, and his face flushed a light pink.

"Th-Thats not what I meant! I-I know it'd be harmful to walk directly on it but-" Tamayo chuckled.

"If you're requesting crutches, then yes, I can provide you with some. Just be careful not to put pressure on that injury of yours," she stared at his casted right leg. "And don't overwork yourself. I figured you'd want to get up and move eventually, although after just a day (two days?) is a tad soon, but still be sure to take it easy. Alright, Tanjiro?" Tanjiro nodded, excitement filling his bright red eyes. Even though it had only been however long, he was itching to get up from the bed and walk around, even if just around the room. While pain still flooded his leg every so often, the pent up energy inside him was harder to overcome. Tamayo left the room shortly after that to get him what he needed to walk. Giyu approached the boy with intrigued head tilts, similar to that of a puppy trying to understand it's owner's expression.
[insert cute puppy head tilts here]

Tanjiro just grinned widely. "You ready to get out of here for a bit, Giyu-san?" Giyu looked at the boy's leg, a hint of hesitation shining in his eyes before he decided it ultimately wasn't that bad of a thing and that his friend could use a little bit of fresh air and free roaming. With that, he gave what looked like a closed-eye smile in return, nodding with an "mhm". About another minute passed before Tamayo appeared once more, this time with crutches in hand. She walked over to Tanjiro, holding them out for him to grab.

"Would it be safe to assume you know how to use these?" Tanjiro nodded.

"Yep! Thank you, Tamayo-san!" Tanjiro took the crutches and placed them firmly on the ground, holding to them tightly as he tried to stand from the bed. Giyu quickly came closer and helped hoist him off, holding him tightly yet gently, supporting him as he gained his balance. "Thank you, Giyu," the boy said, turning his head to beam at the demon. Giyu nodded and slowly released him to stand with the crutches on his own. Tamayo's usual gentle smile rested on her face as she gazed at the two.

"Shall we go, then?" she asked, turning to the door. The demon slayer nodded once again, placing all his weight on his left leg and keeping his right slightly above the floor as he began to move forward. Giyu stuck close to his side, speedily grabbing onto the boy anytime he would stumble or lose balance. Eventually they reached the main room, where Tamayo stopped, a serious and slightly concerned expression spread on her face. "If you wish to go outside, please be careful and don't go far. Alright, Tanjiro? You keep an eye on him, Tomioka." The males looked over to her, and Tanjiro dipped his head the best he could, Giyu simply staring.

"Yes, Lady Tamayo! Thank you for letting me do this!"

"Of course. But if your leg starts to hurt, even just a bit, you need to return to your bed, alright? We can't risk that wound getting worse."

"I will! I'll make sure not to push myself!"

"Good. I trust you won't." Tamayo smiled again then left the room to return to whatever business she may have had. Tanjiro turned to Giyu again, then to the doors.

"Any chance I could get you to allow me outside?" he asked with a hopeful glance. Giyu stared at the doors for a minute, then back at Tanjiro with a sigh.

"Mm-nn (I guess)." Tanjiro smiled gleefully at him, eyes shining once more. He carefully turned himself around and trottled (is that a word?) to the doors. Giyu followed, opening the doors cautiously in case sunlight were to come flooding in. Thankfully, with the sun's current position, none did, and there was a shadow casted in front of the building. Giyu was relieved by this, because otherwise he wouldn't have been able to follow Tanjiro out. With that problem out of the way, he allowed the burgundy-haired boy to exit, following him closely just as he did in the house.

Outside, Tanjiro immediately made his way to the sunlight. Not to be away from Giyu, but to feel the warmth on his face. It was a refreshing feeling after being stuck in the house for over 24 hours. The breeze, the sunlight, the peaceful chirps of nearby birds, all of

it coursed through Tanjiro's veins, filling him with a sense of serenity. Now, one may find this dramatic considering it had been only two or three days, but it wasn't just the being able to go outside that caused all this. In general, the nature surrounding Tamayo's place was full of blissful auras, though rarely recognized considering people usually only came there in dire situations. But now, the boy was focusing on that bliss, and that mixed with Giyu's presence so near was all enough to dramatize over.

Giyu sighed contently as he recognized the boy's joy.

Is anyone still here?? (authors note)

Ummmm hi guys... I don't know if anyone is still here or still knows this exists but..

I have an unfortunate update... I never wanted this to be one of those fics that was never finished but unfortunately, I don't have the motivation to finish this one. I still like demon slayer, but not the way I used to where I was able to make an entire fanfic for it.. I'm no longer as confident in properly portraying the characters, and ngl I forgot what my plans for this were.

I'm sorry to anyone who may be here wanting this fic to continue, and that I broke my promises of finishing it :(

Thank you to all my readers, having my writing become so popular with this fic made me really happy and helped build confidence in my writing :) I appreciate you all and all the kind comments I've received!

Sorry again to anyone who had been looking forward to this continuing. Maybe one day I can come back to it, or even re-write it completely, but I won't make any promises this time. Thank you all for being here and supporting me, it meant the world to me writing this :)